

WARDHA SCHEME

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K. L. SHRIMALI



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THE WARDHA SCHEME

THE GANDHIAN PLAN OF EDUCATION FOR RURAL INDIA

By

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PRINCIPAL

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INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the great prophets of mankind. His life and teachings possess a timeless and universal quality. Though a son of India, he belongs to all lands and peoples. He conquered millions of his fellow human beings, including his adversaries, but he conquered them by the power of his mind and the purity of his heart. He was loved and respected as few men in history have been loved and respected during life. If the human race survives the troubled and terrifying years ahead, his stature will grow with the ages. Indeed, unless men catch something of his vision and spirit, they cannot hope to escape annihilation in the atomic age. Nehru spoke truly in referring to Gandhi at the time of his death in these words: "For a thousand years that light will be seen in this country, and the world will see it".

Gandhi was a great teacher, one of the greatest mankind has ever known. This of course is recognised by all. But that he was at the same

time a distinguished practical educator, a close student of the processes and institutions of education, a creative statesman interested in the shaping of educational policies and programmes for his people, is scarcely known at all in the West. And among those who have some knowledge of this aspect of Gandhi's work few indeed are acquainted with the details of his plan for the development of a comprehensive system of education for rural India. Certainly students of education throughout the world should be familiar with the Wardha Scheme, as it is called, which is an important part of the legacy bequeathed to mankind by this prophet from the East.

It is in this spirit that I am happy to write a word of introduction to the Wardha Scheme. In making this study Dr. Shrimali has rendered an important service both to his own people and to the peoples of the world. He brought to the task a thorough knowledge of the ideas of Gandhi, a grasp of the realities of Indian history and civilization, and an understanding of the educational theories and practices of the West. Also anyone who knows him feels in him something of the moral quality and force of his teacher.

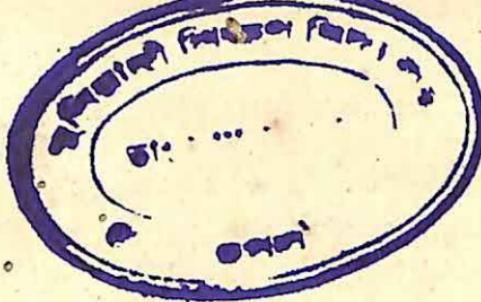
This volume should be widely read. It

makes a genuine contribution to the educational literature of the World. It also opens a window on the people of India as they march under the flag of independence to cooperate with the other nations of the earth in building a lasting peace on the foundations of equality and justice. We all know that the building of such a peace requires above all some of that love of mankind which marked the entire life of Mahatma Gandhi.

GEORGE S. COUNTS

NEW YORK CITY

January 31, 1949



PREFACE

This study is an attempt to show how the Wardha Scheme—a new scheme of education propounded by Mahatma Gandhi—takes the place of the English System of education which was unrelated to Indian Life, and how, by taking into account India's cultural heritage of the past, as well as its present social and economic conditions and future needs, it aims to reconstruct Indian Society.

The study begins with an account of the existing educational situation. This is followed by a discussion of the social and political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and an analysis of Basic National Education. An attempt is made to show how the latter is related to the former and how both have their roots deep in India's cultural heritage. An examination of the present social and economic conditions of Indian society is made in order to indicate how the craft-centred Basic Education programme is suited to meet the present needs of the predominantly rural po-

pulation of India. The linguistic problem in Indian education and the problem of religious education, which have existed in India since the advent of the British, are also discussed, and an attempt is made to show how the Wardha Scheme tries to solve these problems. In the end, the main trends of social, economic and political life of the country are analysed with a view to indicating how the Basic Education programme can, to some extent, shape these developments.

This book was being written in 1947 when great events were taking place in India. The political scene was changing so rapidly that it was hardly possible to keep pace with the quick succession of events.

Since this book was written India has attained her independence, but it is not the type of independence which Mahatma Gandhi had visualised and had worked for. The country was partitioned and in the wake of partition followed the bloodbath of the Hindus and the Muslims. And then to our great sorrow and shame came the murder of the Father of the Nation himself. The tragedy that an apostle of non-violence should meet with the foulest type of violence was repeated.

It is regretted that the publication of this book has been delayed but it is hoped that the book will still be of interest to the reader.

I must express my feelings of gratitude to my professors of the Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York who helped me in writing this book. I must first of all thank Dr. George S. Counts, Director of Social and Philosophical Foundations, who sponsored this thesis and who has also kindly written the introduction to this book. Dr. Counts was usually very busy but the few interviews I had with him made me feel that I was in communion with a great mind. I have been greatly struck by his sincerity of purpose and his firm determination to build up a new social order through education. Another professor with whom I came into close contact both inside and outside the lecture room was Dr. John L. Childs. His faith in social democracy and experimentalism is contagious and it is impossible for one to be with him and not be influenced by him. Dr. Childs made some valuable suggestions for the improvement of this book and I cannot be too grateful to him for his help and guidance. I am equally greatly indebted to Prof. Donald G. Tewksbury in whom I found a true friend and

guide. Prof. Tewksbury was mainly responsible for guiding my research. I was entrusted to his care as he is deeply interested in India and is a great admirer of Indian civilisation. I shall never forget the long conversations I used to have with him. I am sincerely grateful to him for the valuable help which he gave me ungrudgingly.

I shall be failing in my duty if in this connection I did not express my feelings of gratitude to those friends who made it possible for me to visit the United States. In the first place I am grateful to my friend Dr. Josephine L. Rathbone who arranged for a scholarship for me at the Teachers' College, Columbia University as a gesture of goodwill to Vidya Bhawan. Dr. Rathbone visited Vidya Bhawan in 1938 and went away greatly impressed with the pioneering effort which this institution was making in the educational field. Throughout my stay in the U. S. A. I received her sympathy and goodwill and I am sincerely grateful to her. I take this opportunity of thanking Syt. Bhagirathji Kanoria of Calcutta and Syt. Makhan Lalji Seksaria and Mr. Chandan Sinha Bharkatya of Bombay without whose generous financial help I could not have undertaken this

trip. I must also express my gratitude to Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, President of Vidya Bhawan Society whose valuable friendship and affection I have enjoyed all these years and through whose efforts I was able to proceed for higher studies to America.

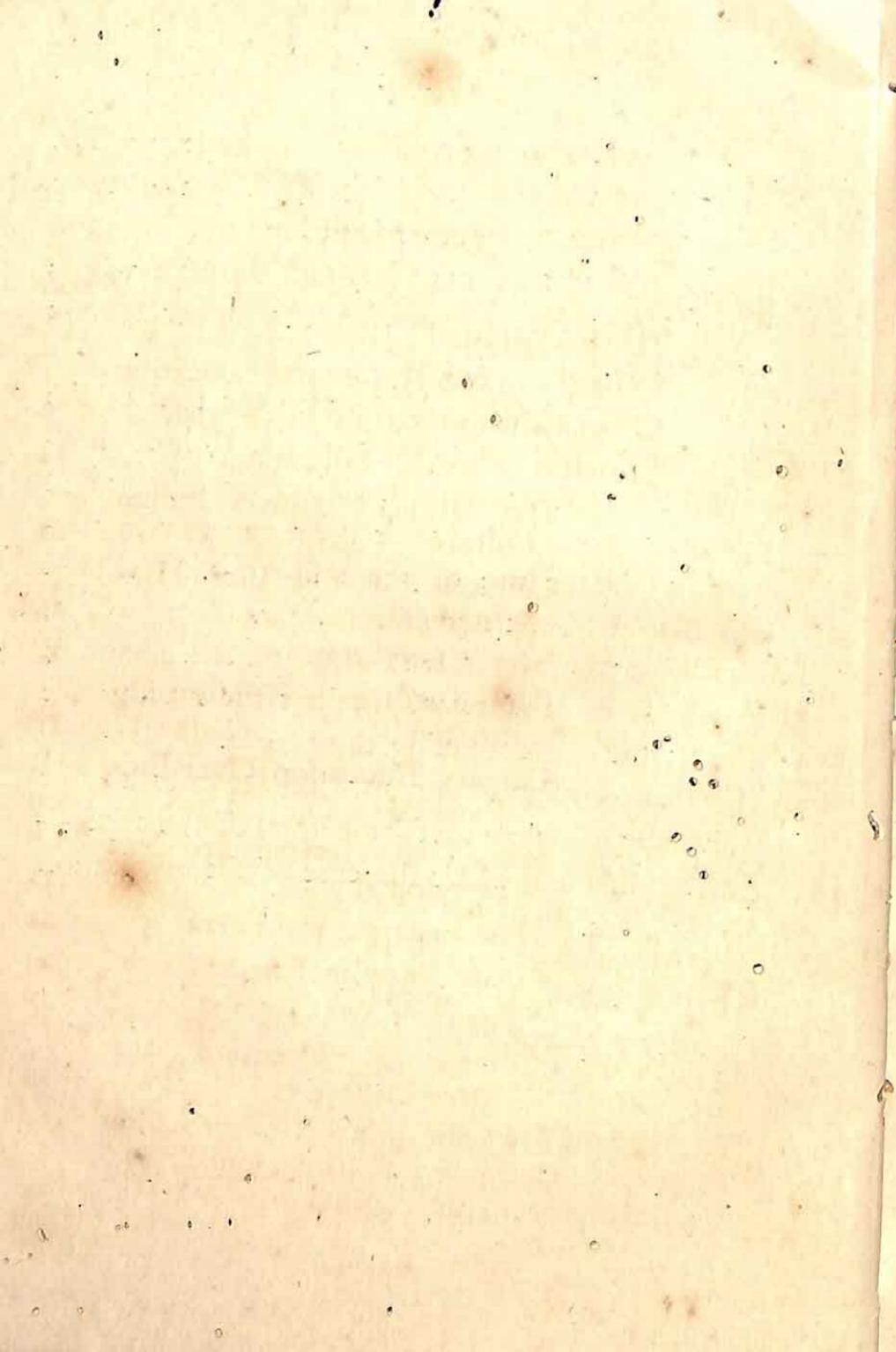
My thanks are also due to the staff of the Missionary Research Library of the Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University Library and the New York Library for their courtesy in permitting me the use of these libraries. I should also like to thank my friends—Mr. George Cole, New York; Syt. Kesari Lal Bordia and Syt. Bhagwan Dayal of Vidya Bhawan, Udaipur for reading the manuscript and correcting the proofs.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to the University of Rajputana for the grant of Rs. 1000/-/- received by me towards the cost of the publication of this book.

UDAIPUR

January 1, 1949

K. L. S.



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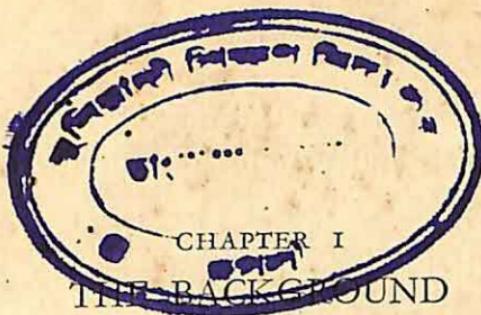
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Mahatma Gandhi has recently propounded a new scheme of education for rural India, which is known as the Wardha Scheme, or Basic Education. This plan aims at a reconstruction of the present educational system of India. In order to make a proper appraisal of this plan, it is first necessary to have some idea of the system of education which was established during the British period and has prevailed up to the present day.

When the British came to India, they found a system of self-governing republics which were called Village Panchayats. The village councils in this system had large powers, both executive and judicial, and their members were treated with the greatest respect. Most of the work in the villages was done co-operatively under the supervision of the Panchayats.¹ Mr. Mount-stuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay

¹ Kumar Goshal, *The People of India*, pp. 20-23.

wrote in 1819 in a report submitted to the Government of British India :

“In whatever point of view we examine the native government in the Deccan, the first and most important feature is the division into villages or townships. These communities contain in miniature all the materials of a state within themselves, and are almost sufficient to protect their members, if all other government were withdrawn.”¹

It was largely due to this system of local self-government that Hindu culture and civilization were able to survive. It “provided a sort of Noah’s Ark in which were safely protected the vital elements of Hindu civilization against the overwhelming political deluges that swept over the country from time to time.”² These village communities developed remarkable public institutions. They had not only public halls, temples, *mathas* (seminars), monasteries and hospitals, but also schools of learning.³ One of the unfortunate

¹ G. W. Forrest, (ed.), *Official Writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone*, pp. 274-75.

² Radha Kumud Mookerji, *Local Self-Government in Ancient India*, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-96.

effects of the British rule was the disintegration of these village republics.¹ Disorganization of the village community which provided an integral process of education for the kind of society it constituted, also affected education.

There has been some controversy about the exact position of education prevalent in India when the British came. Mahatma Gandhi said in his speech in 1931 at the Royal Institute of International Affairs that India was more illiterate then than it had been fifty or a hundred years before. And so was Burma, he said, because the British administrators, when they came, instead of taking hold of things as they were, began to root them out.² This statement, which was primarily based on Adams' *Reports on Vernacular Education in Bengal and Bihar (1835-38)* and Litner's *History of Education in the Punjab Since Annexations and in 1882*, has been challenged by Sir Philip Hartog who has examined these documents.³ Mr. K. S. Vakil, who has examined all these and other documents, draws another conclusion :

¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 26-27.

² *International Affairs*, Vol. X (1931), pp. 727, 734, 735.

³ Sir Philip Hartog, *Some Aspects of Indian Education-Past and Present*, pp. 75-79.

“The statistics of population and schools on which the estimate was based may not, as pointed out by Sir Philip, be sufficient and reliable enough to warrant the estimate given by Mr. Adam in figures..... But this circumstance does not disprove his general conclusion that an extensive system of village schools existed in his time, a hundred years ago. It cannot be summarily rejected as far from the truth by Indians who know well that in pre-British times the schoolmaster was a necessary member of every well-organized village community and was as indispensable to it as its headman, accountant and watchman. In a country where the schoolmaster held such a status and where a substantial portion of the population, the whole of the Brahmin community, the priestly class, regarded it as their sacred duty to impart knowledge to the people and imparted it gratis to all who sought it at their houses rather than in public schools, education could not but be widespread.”¹

There does not seem to be any doubt that

¹ K. S. Vakil, *Education in India*, pp. 87-88.

some kind of elementary education was widely prevalent in the early British period.

“Village schools were scattered over the country-side in which a rudimentary education was given to the children of the trading classes, the peffy landholders, and the well-to-do cultivators..... Seated under a tree or in the verandah of a hut, the children learned to trace the letters of the alphabet with their fingers in the sand, or recite in monotonous tones their spelling or a multiplication table which extends far beyond the twelve-times-twelve of the English school-room.”¹

From the very beginning of the village community, the school-master had a definite place assigned to him in the village economy, in the same manner as the headman, the accountant, the watchman, and the artisan. He was paid either by rent-free lands or by assignments of grain out of the village harvest.²

¹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*. (The Indian Empire) Vol. IV, pp. 407-8.

² John Matthai, *Village Government in British India*, p. 39.

The main reason for the disappearance of these village schools was the break-up of the village system under the British rule. An English author describing the conditions in India writes :

“In every Hindu village which has retained its old form, I am assured that the children are generally able to read, write and cipher, but where we have swept away the village system, as in Bengal, there the village school has also disappeared.”¹

The year 1835 was the turning point in the history of Indian education when Macaulay, who was the Law member of the Governor General’s council, minuted strongly in favour of the adoption of English as the medium of instruction. In his Minute of 1835, he altogether ignored the high intellectual and spiritual value of Oriental literature when he said :

“I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I

¹ Ludlow, *History of British India*, cited in *India* by J. Keir Hardie p. 5.

have read translations of the more celebrated Arabic and Sanskrit works. I have conversed both here and at home with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.”)

In explaining the objects of teaching English he wrote :

“We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.”¹

Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor General of India, concurred entirely with the view expressed by Macaulay in his Minute on the subject and issued a proclamation on March 7, 1835

¹ *Selections from Educational Records, Part I, pp. 107-17.*

from which the following quotation is relevant to the discussion :

“His Lordship in Council is of opinion that the real object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of Education would be best employed on English education alone.

“But it is not the intention of his Lordship in Council to abolish any college or school of native learning while the native population shall be inclined to avail themselves of the advantages it affords.

“It has come to the knowledge of the Governor-General in Council that a large sum has been expended by the committee in the printing of oriental works. His Lordship in Council directs that no portion of the funds shall hereafter be so employed.

“His Lordship directs that all the funds which these reforms will leave at the disposal of the committee be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowl-

edge of English literature and science, through the medium of the English language.”¹

This proclamation gave a decided turn to Indian education by encouraging the education of a few through English and letting alone the education of the many through their own mother tongue. It had far-reaching consequences and the effect here was not confined to the field of education alone but extended widely to the moral, religious and political fields.

To be fair to Macaulay, he was fully aware of its deeper implications. In the great peroration to his speech of July 10, 1833, on the East India Company Bill, delivered shortly before he went to India, he said :

“It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system until it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having been instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in English history.”¹

There is no denying the fact that the introduction of English in the education of India, which was favoured by such an eminent Indian leader as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, created a great intellectual ferment and it was through English that India came into contact with the currents of Western Science and thought and in this way enriched its own culture.

“English education brought a widening of the Indian horizon, an admiration for English literature and institutions, a revolt against some customs and aspects of Indian life, and a growing demand for political reform.”²

It brought

“....liberal ideas of the West which stirred the people and roused them from the slumber of ages. A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future marked the new awakening. Reason and judgment

¹ *The Works of Lord Macaulay*, Vol. VIII, p. 142.

² Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 319.

took the place of faith and belief; superstition yielded to science; immobility was replaced by progress, and a zeal for reform of proved abuses overpowered age-long apathy and inertia, and a complacent acquiescence in whatever was current in society. The traditional meaning of the *shastras* was subjected to critical examination, and new conceptions of morality and religion remodelled the orthodox beliefs and habits.”¹

But the introduction of English and European Criticism of British culture was not an unmixed Education blessing.

In the first place, Macaulay and his compatriots mistook the nature of education. Education is not mere imparting of knowledge but is itself a culture which grows and flourishes in its own soil. It was a mistake to think that Indians could be educated by implanting a foreign system and destroying indigenous culture.

“Men’s minds and habits are not blank

¹ R. C. Majumdar, H. C. Ray Chaudhuri and K. Dutta, *An Advanced History of India*, p. 812.

sheets of paper upon which any legend or faith can be written, or any rule of conduct engraved. The methods and subjects taught in our British civilization have not the same value when taught in another civilization Nothing is truer, or is being proved with more conclusiveness in our own experience during the past two generations than this: education cannot come from above, it must come from below and within. Even as regards weeds in the mind, the problem is not really how to uproot them, but how to transform them. The errors we have committed in our own schools, because we have never fully realized that the whole conception of education had to be transformed and not merely refitted, with a new apparatus of thought and conduct, we have multiplied a thousandfold in India. We have been seeking to transfer Western civilization into the Indian mind gutted of its Indian traditions. We have tried to transplant Oxford and Eton into India. We have imposed a school discipline and a school psychology which are English, and then have wondered at our failure. The French,

German and American systems are not English because France, Germany and America are not England, but we have assumed that India is England. The task we set before us was an impossible one. We aimed at destroying Indian culture. We put impediments in the way of Indian thought by compelling the Indian student to express himself in English.”¹

But this Western system did not rest content with the destruction of Indian culture. The harm which it did to the Indian mind was even greater.

“We have not only made it despise its own culture and throw it out; we have asked it to fill up the vacant places with furniture which will not stand the climate. The mental Eurasianism that is in India is appalling. Such minds are nomads. They belong to no civilization, no country and no history. They create a craving that cannot be satisfied, and ideals that are unreal. They deprive men of the nourishment of their cultural past, and the substitutes they apply are unsubstantial.”²

¹ J. Ramsay Macdonald, *The Government of India*, p. 169.

² J. Ramsay Macdonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-72.

The products of this system formed a community by themselves. They lived in India but did not belong to the general community.

“Living in India, not the geographical expression but the Mother-land of a people and the atmosphere of a race, these are not at home there. Not able to join in the organic life of their community, they tend to become parasitical and to live on it. They have to create new ways of living, from multiplying legal cases to quack doctoring ; and, when this is observed by critics, the Indian is condemned, whereas the blame lies very largely with those who have placed false ideals before him, and have led him in mistaken ways. We sought to give the Eastern mind a Western content and environment ; we have succeeded too well in establishing intellectual and moral anarchy in both.”¹

In the second place, the system cut off the child entirely from his physical and social surroundings. The courses taught in the school were entirely unrelated to Indian life.

(2) Children Cut off from Environment

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 171-72.

“The school has become not a combination and complement of the home, but an unreal dream of six hours in the day, during which a language was heard spoken quite different from the language of the real home life; birds and animals and events and phenomena were described which were remote from the student’s experience and perhaps even his rosiest ambitions; and customs and institutions were held up for his admiration which had no connection with his life.”¹

The fact that the education of the child was divorced from his surroundings is corroborated by a recent Press Communiqué issued by the Government of Madras :

“The scheme of studies for elementary school is not sufficiently related to the life and surroundings of both parents and pupils. This is particularly so in the rural elementary schools. If the village school is to be of real value to the village children and to the surrounding rural life generally, the teaching imparted in the school must be directly related to the realities of life in its environment. The

¹ T. N. Siqueira, *The Education of India*, p. 207. See also Sir Valentine Chirol, *India*, pp. 137-38.

stereotyped methods now generally employed by schoolmasters, many of whom do not belong to rural areas, tend to make study in the school something foreign and extraneous, and therefore something difficult and uninteresting to the majority of the pupils. The teaching of nature study, for example, from a textbook without its being in any way related to the actual life in and around the school is of no practical value. There is little or no power of observation, hardly any practical work, and no interest in gardening. The teacher usually tends to divorce the pupil from village life and hereditary occupations rather than help to train better villagers..... The Government believes that the main reason for the abnormal wastage in elementary schools lies in the schools themselves—inadequate, improperly equipped schools, and above all, curricula and methods of teaching completely unrelated to the life and surroundings of both the parents and pupils.”¹

¹ Press Communiqué issued by the Government of Madras on June 26, 1937; cited in the *Yearbook of Education*, 1940, pp. 427-40.

This was a great tragedy. The child began to lose contact with his home and surroundings and did not fit into the new but artificial world created in the school.

Thirdly, the system with its emphasis on the English language, split the Indian society into two classes which ultimately formed new 'castes' in India. This division has done a great harm to the growth and development of the social organism. British educators overlooked the great truth

"that a national literature can only coexist with a national language, and that as long as knowledge is restricted to a foreign garb, it can be the property only of a few who can command leisure and opportunity for its attainment. It was obvious that a language, so difficult as English and so utterly discordant with every Indian dialect, could never become the universal medium of instruction, and that, even if it would be extensively studied, which, beyond certain narrow limits, was highly improbable, it would

New 'Castes' Form-
ed

constitute the literature of a class—never that of the people.”¹

This has been one of the unfortunate results of English teaching in India. It has created two distinct strata in the society—English-knowing people who usually hold positions in government service, and the rest, non-English knowing people who make up the mass of Indian population and who are looked down upon by the former.

In the fourth place, the Western system of education lacked the most characteristic spirit of earlier Indian education. Lord Ronaldshay wrote in 1925,

“The high school and undergraduate courses are essentially Western courses, unrelated to Indian life as it was lived before the advent of the British. They are rigidly mechanical, and altogether lack that intimate relationship between teacher and taught which was an outstanding feature of the indigenous system.”²

¹ H. H. Wilson, *History of British India*, Vol. III, p. 307.

² Lord Ronaldshay, *The Heart of Aryavarta*, p. 13.

In the fifth place, Western education laid almost exclusive emphasis upon a literary education as the primary aim was to prepare young men for government clerical service. This had the unfortunate effect of neglecting science, technology, and practical education. "From the economic point of view India has been handicapped by the want of professional and technical instruction: her colleges turn out numbers of young men qualified for government clerkships while the real interests of the country require, for example, doctors and engineers in excess of the existing supply."¹ Both the cultivator and the craftsman viewed this unpractical education with disfavour "as tending to estrange their boys from their surroundings and to make them dissatisfied with their hereditary calling without necessarily fitting them for anything better."²

The Indian Industrial Commission in 1918 reported :

¹ Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms (presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty), 1918, p. 150.

² Sir M. Visvesvarya, *Reconstructing India*, p. 258.

"The system of education introduced by Government was, at the outset, mainly intended to provide for the administrative needs of the country and encouraged literary and philosophical studies to the neglect of those of a more practical character. In the result it created a disproportionate number of persons possessing a purely literary education, at a time when there was hardly any form of practical education in existence. Throughout the nineteenth century, the policy of Government was controlled by the doctrine of *laissez-faire* in commercial and industrial matters, and its efforts to develop the material resources of the country were largely limited to the provision of improved methods of transport and the construction of irrigation works. Except in Bombay, the introduction of modern methods of manufacture was almost entirely confined to the European community. The opportunities for gaining experience were not easy for Indians to come by, and there was no attempt at technical training for industries until nearly the end of the

century, and then only on an inadequate scale.”¹

In the sixth place, English education failed

(6) Sense of Citizenship not Developed to develop a sense of citizenship and social efficiency.

“The exclusive development of the intelligence and the neglect of the emotions has overstimulated the self-regarding instincts and has largely destroyed the feeling of social and National Dharma, of duty to society and to the Nation; hence the decay of public spirit, of social service, of responsibility and of sacrifice for the common weal, which characterize the good *citizen* as distinguished from the good *man*.”²

“Education has not yet established in India the feeling that the State or the Township or the Village have their rights and a claim

to the loyalty of individuals, and that it is disastrous to stop short at or rest content with the safeguarding of the rights and privileges of the individual, the family, or the caste.”³

¹ Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18, p. 92.

² Annie Besant, Kamala Lectures, pp. 17-18.

³ Arthur Mayhew, The Education of India, p. 114.



In the seventh place, there was slow progress in primary education under the British rule. This may be judged from the slight increase in the percentage of literacy. The Indian Statutory Commission was right in affirming: "Primary education is ineffective unless it at least produces literacy."¹ The following figures² tell their own tale with regard to the rate of progress of literacy in India :

TABLE I
Rate of Progress of Literacy

Year						Percentage of Literacy ³
1881	..	..	..	..	..	3.5
1891	..	..	..	..	..	4.6
1901	..	..	..	..	..	5.3
1911	..	..	..	..	..	5.9
1921	..	..	..	..	..	7.3
1931	..	..	..	..	..	8.0

The Hartog Committee realized that this progress was very slow. "Between 1892 and 1922

¹ *Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission*, p. 44.

² R. V. Parulekar, *Literacy in India*, p. 11.

³ N. B.: The figures are for all persons of all ages and they relate to the whole of the Indian Empire (including Burma).

the percentage of male literates of five years and over in British India increased by only 1.4 per cent (from 13.0 to 14.4) and that of female literates by 1.3 per cent (from 0.7 to 2.0). The percentage of literates of both sexes and all ages was only 7.2 in 1921. Progress has been extremely slow.”¹

The Hartog Committee made a further observation which reflects unfavourably on the administration of British India. It stated that the percentage of literates in some territories adjoining British India was greater than in British India, as the following figures show:

TABLE II

*Percentage of Literates in 1921 in some Territories
Adjoining British India²*

				Males	Females
Baroda ..	..	..	..	24.0	4.7
Travancore ..	..	..	..	38.0	17.3
Cochin ..	..	..	..	31.7	11.5
Ceylon ..	..	..	..	56.3	21.2

¹ *Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, op. cit.*, p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 345.

In the eighth place, there has been great wastage in education. In
 (8) Great Waste in
 Education concluding their review of
 the growth of education,
 the Hartog Committee pointed out:

“Throughout the whole educational system there is waste and ineffectiveness. In the primary system, which from our point of view should be designed to produce literacy and the capacity to exercise an intelligent vote, the waste is appalling. So far as we can judge, the vast increase in numbers in primary schools produces no commensurate increase in literacy, for only a small proportion of those who are at the primary stage reach Class IV, in which the attainment of literacy may be expected....

“It is to be remembered that under present conditions of rural life, and with the lack of suitable vernacular literature, a child had very little chance of attaining literacy after leaving school, and, indeed, even for the literate, there are heavy chances of relapse into illiteracy.

“The wastage in the case of girls is even

more serious than in the case of boys. The disparity in education and literacy between women and men so far from decreasing by the effort made is actually increasing. The disparity between the wealthier parts of the country and the poorer parts also tends to increase.”¹

- In the ninth place, there has been a neglect of mass education. It was not

(9) Neglect of Mass Education

the intention of the rulers to secure a reasonable amount of

education to the great bulk of the Indian masses. The policy dominating the system for over three quarters of a century was to educate the ‘classes’ and it was believed that when the ‘classes’ were educated they would carry down the culture to the masses by the natural process of ‘filtration.’ It was not realised that the ‘classes’ do not impart their culture to the masses. It was, however, characteristic of imperialism not to educate the masses.² According to the imperialistic conception of instruction, the less education among the masses, the better, as uneducated people are easier to control.³

¹ *Ibid.*

² R. V. Parulekar, *Literacy in India*, pp. 11-12.

³ John S. Hoyland, *Indian Crisis*, p. 95.

Till about the beginning of the second decade of the present century, the idea of mass education was never in the mind of the government. It was only in 1911 for the first time that Mr. G. K. Gokhale introduced a Bill for Compulsory Education. But as the official members were in a clear majority in the Central Legislature at that time, and as a number of non-official members were also opposed to it for some reason or another, the motion to refer the bill to a select committee was defeated by 58 votes to 13.¹

In the tenth place, even the compulsory measures introduced by the government were ineffective.

(10) Compulsory Education Measures Ineffective
In 1917-22 some progress was made towards compulsory education. In 1918, the Bombay Primary Education Act was passed which enabled the municipalities, under certain conditions, to introduce compulsory education within their areas. In 1919, four acts for compulsory primary education were passed—the Punjab Primary Education Act, the United Provinces Primary Education Act, the Bengal Primary Education

¹ Syed Nurullah, and J. P. Naik, *History of Education in India*, p. 424.

Act, and the Bihar and Orissa Primary Education Act. In 1920, three more acts, viz, the City of Bombay Primary Education Act, the Central Provinces Primary Education Act, and the Madras Elementary Education Act were passed. The progress of compulsion, however, was slow and ineffective and in some of the provinces it was not applied to girls at all. Even in the areas where compulsion was introduced, the enforcement was far from satisfactory. "At the rate of progress seen in this period, it would take India nearly 500 years to introduce universal compulsion."¹ "In none of the provinces can the results so far obtained be considered satisfactory."² The Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education in reviewing the present position in India with regard to compulsion points out:

"In 1940-41 compulsion was in force in 194 urban areas and 3,297 rural areas (comprising 14,501 villages) in British India. Of these 66 urban and 2,908 rural areas were in the Punjab. It extended in no

¹ Nurullah and Naik, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

² Sir Philip Hartog, *Some Aspects of Indian Education*, p. 40.

case beyond the end of the primary stage, i. e., Class IV or V, and except in 23 areas, applied to boys only. Moreover, it cannot be said that in any of these areas, even in the Punjab, compulsion is really effective.

"Apart from the comparatively few compulsory areas, attendance at school has been and is still on a voluntary basis. In 1936-37 there were 1,19,85,986 (11,985,986) pupils on the registers of some school or other as compared with approximately 6,00,00,000 (60,000,000) children in the 5-14 age group. Of these children 51,88,601 (5,188,601) were in Class I, 23,55,418 (2,355,418) in Class II, 17,22,292, (1,722,292) in Class III, 12,14,504 (1,214,504) in Class IV, and only 7,03,628 (703, 628) in Class V. The rest were in middle schools, including the middle sections of high schools. Figures for previous years record a similar falling off. Attendance is of course better in some areas than in others, but in regard to British India as a whole, these figures mean that less than one out of every four children stayed long enough at school to reach the earliest

stage, viz., Class IV, at which permanent literacy is likely to be attained. The result is that money spent on the others (nearly 80 per cent) may be regarded as largely wasted.”¹

This wastage could be stopped only by making education compulsory. The Congress Party has long been in favour of compulsion. So long ago as 1928, the All Parties Conference, under the presidency of Dr. Ansari and chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru, set out the following among the fundamental rights:

“All citizens in the Commonwealth of India have the right to free elementary education without any distinction of caste or creed in the matter of admission into any educational institution, maintained or aided by the State, and such rights shall be enforceable as soon as due arrangements shall have been made by competent authorities.”²

But as the Congress remained out of power all these years, this could not be materialized.

¹ *Post-War Educational Development in India*, Report by the Central Advisory Board of Education (2nd ed.), p. 6

² *All Parties Conference Report*, 1928, p. 102.

Need for Educational Reconstruction

The British rulers, like all imperialists, aimed at a dual conquest to consolidate their hold on the country.

“The conquest was physical or territorial, followed and supplemented by the cultural. As a matter of fact, the physical and cultural conquests were the two facets of an imperialist’s plan—the inseparable components of a total Imperialism.”¹

The greatest tragedy of education in India has been that the rulers failed to appreciate the traditional culture of the Indian people. It was a grave error to wipe out one of the oldest civilizations of the world and substitute in its place a different culture and different educational values. This error is one of the important causes of conflict between India and Great Britain. It has created considerable enmity between the peoples of these two countries, and the future of Indo-British relationship has become extremely uncertain.

There has been an urgent demand all over the

¹ B. K. Bowman-Behram, *Educational Controversies in India*, p. 611.

country to replace the existing type of education by a more dynamic and living education.

It was in response to this demand that a small conference of educationists met at Wardha in October, 1937 to consider the new plan for the reconstruction of education in India. This Conference appointed a committee with Dr. Zakir Hussain, Principal, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, as chairman, to prepare a detailed plan for submission to Mahatma Gandhi, who served as the President of the Conference.

The Report of this Committee, which is known as the Wardha Scheme, seeks to regain cultural continuity with India's past and provide adequately for the social and political needs of the India of today and tomorrow.



CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

All planning essentially includes some end or objective. Planning without an end is meaningless. An

Introduction
educational plan always involves preference of some values over others. The Wardha Scheme is no exception to this. Before discussing the objectives of the Wardha Scheme, it would therefore be helpful to discuss the social and political ideas of Mahatma Gandhi.

In order to understand his social and political philosophy, it is necessary to have some idea of the two basic assumptions of Gandhian Assumptions of Gandhian Philosophy philosophy which are (1) Truth and (2) Non-Violence. Gandhiji does not isolate politics from religion which for him is the search for Truth. "Politics bereft of religion," he writes, "are absolute dirt ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations

must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words, a seeker after God and Truth.”¹

For Gandhiji, Truth is the highest goal.

Truth and God are the same.

He writes, “I have no God to serve but Truth.”² Truth for him is the only reality. “The world rests on the bedrock of *Satya* or Truth. *Asatya*, meaning untruth, also means “non-existent,” and *Satya*, or Truth, means “that which is,” and can never be destroyed. This is the doctrine of *Satyagraha* in a nutshell.”³

To Mahatma Gandhi, Truth is not a mere quality which manifests itself in word and deed, it has a divine significance.

“For me Truth is the sovereign principle which includes numerous other principles. This Truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God. There are innumerable definitions

¹ *Young India*, June 18, 1925.

² *Harijan*, April 15, 1939.

³ C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi--His own Story*, p. 225.

of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him... Often in my progress I have had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God, and daily the conviction is growing upon me that He alone is real and all else is unreal."¹

According to Mahatma Gandhi, Truth is identical with reality. It is his belief that reality is good and will ultimately triumph over evil and hatred. Gandhiji writes:

"And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is love. He is the Supreme God."²

This belief of Gandhiji is in accordance with the philosophy of the Upanishads, according to

¹ M. K. Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Vol. I, p. 7.

² *Young India*, October 11, 1928.

which Reality asserts itself in the midst of evil. For the sake of self-realisation it is the duty of man to fight against evil. It is only in this way that he can find his true self. Struggle against evil is the path of self-realisation. Gandhiji writes:

“I know, too, that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become the nearer to God I feel myself to be.”¹

Non-violence In Gandhiji’s scheme of life there is no place for hate because that is the very negation of Reality. Evil can be conquered not by being evil but by being good. Hate and violence can be defeated only through love and non-violence. It is for this reason that non-violence becomes such an important principle in Gandhiji’s life. “I want to see God face to face. God I *know* is Truth. For *me* the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence—*Ahimsa*—love.”²

¹ *Ibid.*, October 11, 1938.

² *Young India*, April 3, 1924.

Man, who is capable of having a greater grasp of Truth or Reality, is expected to employ right means to achieve his ends. "Non-violence is the law of our species, as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of the man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit."¹ For Gandhiji truth cannot be attained through violence as truth and non-violence are inseparable.

Non-Violence is preferred to violence because in dealing with evil, the former proves more effective. It is a triumph of the moral principle over physical force. "Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man."² Gandhiji believes that love and non-violence are in accordance with reality and therefore will ultimately triumph over hate and violence which lack moral support. Non-violence shakes the opponent's will by destroying his morale.

¹ *Ibid.*, August 11, 1920.

² *Ibid.*, February 12, 1925.

Gandhiji has repeatedly pointed out that his non-violence is not born of weakness but of moral strength. It is a soul-force. It requires greater strength for a person to love the adversary than to hit him. "In my opinion," says Gandhiji, "non-violence is not passivity in any shape or form. Non-violence, as I understand it, is the most active force in the world....Non-violence is the supreme law."¹ Gandhiji's non-violence has nothing in it of passivity or cowardice. Conscious suffering is the outcome of inner strength. Non-violence is not meek submissiveness but soul-force pitted against tyranny. It has no place for cowardice or even weakness. Gandhiji says quite clearly:

— "I do believe that, where there is choice only between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence.... I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour."²

But Gandhiji believes that as a moral weapon

¹ *Harijan*, December 24, 1938.

² *Young India*, August 11, 1920.

non-violence is far superior to any physical force.

“Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire’s fall or its regeneration.”¹

This method of opposing physical force by soul force is called by Gandhiji

Satyagraha (*Satya* = Truth,

Agraha=holding fast). It is a misnomer to call it “passive resistance” because it is not mere passive refusal to do things but an active and aggressive effort to secure redress of wrong. It is really a moral equivalent of war without all its horrors and evils. It is a method of securing a right by personal suffering and not by inflicting injury on others.² There is, however, no coercion in *Satyagraha*.

“It is often forgotten that it is never the intention of a *Satyagrihi* to embarrass the wrongdoer. The appeal is never to his fear;

¹ *Ibid.*, August 11, 1920.

² *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 170.

it is, must be, always to his heart. 'The *Satyagrahi*'s object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrongdoer.'¹

The method of *Satyagraha* is a kind of non-violent direct action. It can be applied by individuals or groups or nations for redressing their wrongs.

"It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women and children. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak so long as they are not capable of meeting violence by violence.... This force is to violence, and therefore to all tyranny, all injustice, what light is to darkness. In politics, its use is based upon the immutable maxim, that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed."²

Though the principle has universal applica-

¹ *Harijan*, March 25, 1939.

² *Young India*, November 3, 1927.

bility, Gandhiji would adopt it as a last resort. Before this method is adopted by individuals, groups or nations, they should make every possible effort at a peaceful solution of the social conflict. As *Satyagraha* is based on truth, direct action must always be preceded by negotiation.

“Since *Satyagraha* is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a *satyagrahi* exhausts all other means before he resorts to *Satyagraha*. He will, therefore, constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to *Satyagraha*. But when he has found the impelling call of the inner voice within him and launches out upon *Satyagraha*, he has burnt his boats and there is no receding.”¹

Satyagraha may take various forms such as agitation; demonstration; fasting; strike; picketting; economic boycott; non-payment of taxes; non-cooperation; and civil disobedience. Gandhiji

¹ *Young India*, October 20, 1927.

has launched these campaigns in various forms. As an example of Gandhiji's method of *Satyagraha* may be taken his historic fast in September, 1932. Gandhiji had been working for the abolition of untouchability since early in his life. He has considered untouchability as a curse of Hinduism and has been striving hard to remove this blot. In 1931, J. Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister, in his speech at the Round Table Conference favoured the depressed classes demand for a separate electorate. Gandhiji considered this as a sinister move which would create a permanent division in Hinduism. He therefore set his face against it and announced at the meeting that he would resist this proposal with his life. In spite of this warning the Premier announced his decision on August 17, 1932, in which a number of specially reserved constituencies were created for the untouchables and they were also given additional rights to contest seats in the general constituencies. On August 18, 1932, Gandhiji wrote to the Premier that the only way in which he could resist the decision was by declaring "a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind save water with or without salt and soda." Gandhiji started this fast on September 21. The whole nation was stirred. Agreement was

arrived at between the leaders of caste-Hindus and those of depressed classes and a pact was signed which was known as the "Yervada Pact." The Cabinet accepted the pact and revised their previous decision. This was a victory for *Satyagraha*.¹

Mahatma Gandhi's programme of economic boycott of British goods may be taken as another example of *Satyagraha*. On account of the Swadeshi movement the import of British goods in India had been gradually declining. The following figures,² however, will indicate that the *Satyagraha* of 1930, when boycott became most effective, was largely responsible for hitting the British commercial interests very severely:

TABLE III

Total Exports of the United Kingdom to British India, in Millions of Pounds

Year						Pounds
1924	..	..	..	..	..	90,577,148
1925	..	..	..	..	..	86,047,757
1926	..	..	..	..	..	81,755,046
1927	..	..	..	..	..	85,044,842
1928	..	..	..	..	..	83,900,440
1929	..	..	..	..	..	78,227,208
1930	..	..	..	..	..	52,944,447

¹ The story of the Fast, its genesis, circumstances and conclusion is beautifully described by Gandhiji's secretary, Syt. Pyarelal in his book, *The Epic Fast*.

² *Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom* (83), p. 378.

The success of the economic boycott may further be judged from the decline of cotton piece-goods imported into India from Great Britain.

“The total Indian import of cotton piece-goods from all countries has increased from 1,823,000,000 yards in 1924 to 1,936,000,000 yards in 1929, and 1,919,000,000 yards in 1930; but Great Britain’s export of the same commodity to India has fallen from 1,250,000,000 to 1,076,000,000 yards in 1929, before the *Satyagraha* was started, and to 720,000,000 yards in 1930, when the boycott was in full swing. This indicated a decline of 14 per cent in the normal year of 1929, and of 42.4 per cent in the boycott year. There was an 84 per cent drop between October, 1930 and April, 1931, when the boycott was at its zenith.”¹

As a seeker after truth Gandhiji could not compromise with wrong. He staked his life in the cause of justice. As a *Satyagrahi* he could only adopt the method of personal suffering. “My fast I want to throw in the scale of justice,” said Gandhiji. “This may look childish to the

¹ Krishnalal Shridharani, *War Without Violence*, p. 24.

onlookers, but not so to me. If I had anything more to give, I would throw in that also to remove this curse, but I have nothing more than my life."¹ This was an assertion of truth and right. The method followed was not of violence and coercion, but of love and suffering.

Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence

Origin of *Satya-graha* has made a great appeal to the Indian people. The reason is

obvious. Suffering—self-imposed or borne in the spirit of self-sacrifice—has been deeply imbedded in the tradition and spirit of India. In the Vedic period the property and possessions dear to oneself were sacrificed as this was the way to demonstrate one's affection for God. In the Upanishadic period, ritualistic forms of sacrifice underwent intellectual refinement and spiritual meaning was given to these forms. Suffering, undergone in a spirit of self-sacrifice, was considered of real value and sacrificial ritualism attained a secondary position. During the Epic period, the principle of sacrifice was further humanised by Jainism. *Ahimsa* (non-violence) was considered the greatest of all religions. It meant non-injury in thought, word or deed to any breath-

¹ Pyarelal, *The Epic Fast*, pp. 35-36.

ing thing. Though Jainism stopped ritualistic sacrifice it emphasized suffering of the ego through a process of self-negation. This was followed by Buddhism which gave a more positive form to the doctrine of *Ahimsa*. It preached that suffering in the world and violence of mankind could be removed only through love and compassion. Prince Vardhaman (who won the title of "Jina"—The Victor—and who was the last prophet of the Jains) and Buddha were followed by Asoka, the Emperor of India, who further developed the doctrine of *Ahimsa* by applying it to the social and political activities of government. He attempted to solve the problems of administration without using physical violence, i.e., through non-violence. During the Middle Ages a number of mystics arose both among Hindus and Moslems—men and women—like Kabir, Nanak, Namdeva, Tukaram, Muktabai, Jaydeva, Chandidas, Chaitanya and Mirabai, who preached that salvation lay through *Bhakti*—devotion to God and by following the path of non-violence. The influence of these mystics on Indian life and culture can be seen even up to the present day.¹

¹ Krishnalal Shridharani, *War Without Violence*, pp. 165-81.

Mahatma Gandhi falls in line with these great religious preachers and saints of India. He himself acknowledges his debt to this religious tradition of non-violence.

“I have derived much religious benefit from Jain religious works as I have from the scriptures of the other great faiths of the world. I owe much to the living company of the deceased philosopher, Rajachanda Kavi, who was a Jain by birth.”¹

About his method of *Satyagraha*, he writes,

“Truth-force is soul-force and is the opposite of the force of arms. The former is a purely religious instrument; its conscious use is therefore possible only in men religiously inclined. Prahalad, Mirabai, and others were passive resisters.”²

Mahatma Gandhi’s great contribution to this ancient doctrine of *Ahimsa* is that he has applied the method to solve India’s political and social problems and to free her from foreign domination. Gandhism is a culmination of the ancient principle

¹ *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 345.

² *Ibid.*, p. 192.

of sacrifice and self-suffering which has influenced Indian thought from time immemorial.

It should be mentioned that in developing his method Mahatma Gandhi has also been influenced by Western thought. Explaining the genesis of passive resistance, he writes,

“It was the New Testament which really awakened me to the rightness of value of Passive Resistance. When I read in the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ such passages as ‘Resist not him that is evil but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also’ and ‘Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven,’ I was simply overjoyed and found my own opinion confirmed where I least expected it. The ‘Bhagwad Gita’ deepened the impression and Tolstoy’s ‘The Kingdom of God Is Within You’ gave it a permanent form.”¹

The three moderns who left a permanent and deep impression on Mahatma Gandhi’s mind are: “Raychandbhai by his living contact; Tols-

¹ *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 161.

toy by his book, 'The Kingdom Of God Is Within You,' and Ruskin, by his 'Unto This Last.'¹

In addition to this long tradition of sacrifice and self-suffering in India, there are certain culture traits and conditions in Indian life which have favoured and to some extent contributed to the growth of *Satyagraha*. In the first place, as a result of the imperialistic policy of Britain, the Indian people were disarmed. It was not practicable to offer armed resistance to Britain with all its modern armaments and weapons to win India's freedom. The battle could be successfully fought only on the moral plane. In the second place, the caste system restricted the use of weapons to the Kshattriya (warrior) group only. The other remaining castes—Brahmins, Vaishyas and Sudras—became indifferent to military life and gradually the fighting instinct was dulled. During the British occupation the civilian population began to consider the art of warfare as no concern of theirs and it was considered something ignoble. In the third place, the Hindu doctrine of *Karma* has to some extent exercised

¹ Andrews, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-03.

a baneful influence on the Indian masses. The doctrine itself is valuable in life as it inspires hope for the future and resignation to the past. But the Indian people lost the spirit of action and strife and began to have faith in fate and blind reliance on divine dispensation. In the last place, the philosophy of Upanishads has taught the Hindus for generations that evil cannot cling to man for all time. Evil is opposed to the very nature of things. Truth will ultimately triumph and prevail in the world.¹

The long established tradition that suffering is the condition of progress, and sacrifice the principle of evolution, combined with the external conditions of disarmament and ethics of the people, created a favourable ground for the emergence and growth of Gandhiji's method of *Satyagraha*. It is difficult for a Westerner to understand the philosophy of non-violence, but to an Indian who is brought up in that culture and tradition, non-violence makes a tremendous appeal. Writing about Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru says,

“Perhaps in every other country he would

¹ Shridharani, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-209.

be out of place today, but India still seems to understand, or at least to appreciate, the prophetic-religious type of man, talking of sin and salvation and non-violence. Indian mythology is full of stories of great ascetics, who, by the rigour of their sacrifices and self-imposed penance, built up a 'mountain of merit' which threatened the dominion of some of the lesser gods and upset the established order. These myths have often come to my mind when I have watched the amazing energy and inner power of Gandhiji, coming out of some inexhaustible spiritual reservoir."¹

The Gandhian economy is based on Gandhiji's social philosophy the basic principle of which is non-violence. Any economic structure which is based on force and violence is therefore ruled out in Gandhiji's scheme. The whole of Gandhian philosophy is based on cooperation between the different groups of society. In Gandhiji's scheme both capital and labour can co-exist, and live harmoniously. "I have always said,"

Economic Structure of a Non-Violent Society

¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, pp. 253-54.

he writes, "that my ideal is that capital and labour should supplement each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony, capital not only looking to the material welfare of the labourers, but their moral welfare also—capitalists being trustees for the welfare of the labouring classes under them."¹ Gandhiji does not want to destroy the property of private owners, but to restrict its enjoyment so that the existing poverty and discontent may be eradicated from society. The peasants and workers must feel as co-partners with the Zemindars and Capitalists.²

Gandhiji recognises that there is exploitation in the present society but the destruction of the capitalist is no remedy for this. In accordance with the principle of non-violence, one should do away with the wrong and not the wrong-doer.

"It can easily be demonstrated," writes Gandhiji, "that destruction of the capitalist must mean destruction in the end of the workers; and as no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroy-

¹ *Young India*, August 20, 1925.

² *Ibid.*, November 21, 1929.

ing him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil.”¹

Though Gandhiji recognises the right of each individual to have equal opportunity, he does not believe that all have the same capacity and ability to earn. Persons with greater talent should be allowed to earn more. It would be wrong to curb their initiative and intelligence.²

What is then the remedy to resolve the present conflict? How are we to plan society so that the worker may get his rightful share and may not be subject to exploitation?

Mahatma Gandhi has two solutions to offer. In the first place, he would appeal to the capitalist to act as a trustee of his property. He would appeal to his sense of justice to use the bulk of his earnings for the good of the state.³ This is the method of non-violence—the method of conversion.

In the second place, Gandhiji would also ask the workers to organise themselves. Much of the trouble in the present society is due to the fact that the workers are not properly organised.

¹ *Ibid.*, March 26, 1931.

² *Ibid.*, March 26, 1931.

³ *Young India*, March 26, 1931.

The worker has to realise that his skill is his capital and that the capitalist is as much dependent on him as he is on the capitalist. Gandhiji writes :

“If both labour and capital have the gift of intelligence equally developed in them and have confidence in their capacity to secure a fair deal, each at the hands of the other, they would get to respect and appreciate each other as equal partners in a common enterprise. They need not regard each other as inherently irreconcilable antagonists. But the difficulty is that whilst today capital is organised and seems to be securely entrenched, labour is not. The intelligence of the working man is cramped by his soulless, mechanical occupation which leaves him little scope or chance to develop his mind. It has prevented him from realizing the power and full dignity of his status. He has been taught to believe that his wages have to be dictated by capitalists instead of his demanding his own terms. Let him only be organised along right lines and have his intelligence quickened, let him

learn a variety of occupations, and he will be able to go about with his head erect and never be afraid of being without means of sustenance.”¹

Gandhism *versus* Socialism

There is much that is common between Gandhism and Socialism. Both aim at serving the common man and producing more social justice and economic equality than prevail in the world today. Both are fresh systems of values which have released the hopes and aspirations of millions of suppressed people. But they have fundamental differences.²

In the first place, Gandhism operates through love and pity of the poor and has no room for violence. Socialism and especially communism work through hatred of the rich and have to cling to military and police violence as prime controls of society.³

In the second place, though Gandhiji recognises the conflict in the present society, he does not believe that class war is necessary for

¹ *Harijan*, July 3, 1937.

² Richard. B. Gregg, *Gandhism and Socialism*, pp. 30-31.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

resolving this conflict. According to him capital and labour should supplement and help each other. Gandhism is a method of conversion and not of violence and coercion. Gandhiji is aware that conversion is a long process, but in the meantime the workers can organise and exert influence over the capitalist.

In the third place, Gandhism does not favour centralisation of agriculture or industry. It wishes to build the economic and social structure on decentralised agriculture and industry. Cottage and village industries on the basis of limited private property therefore find an important place in the Gandhian plan of economic reconstruction.¹

“When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end.... There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of

¹ See *The Gandhian Plan* by S. N. Agarwal.

the few, and want in the midst of plenty in regard to the rest.”¹

Under his scheme nothing will be allowed to be produced by cities which can equally well be produced by the villages. The proper function of cities is to serve as clearing houses for village products. In this way cottage industries and large-scale production could be harmonised.²

It must, however, be made clear that Gandhiji is not aiming at a peasant society which will forego all the benefits of the machine. His principal aim is to resuscitate the villages through village industries. This object is not to destroy the machine but to impose limitations on it. He writes :

“I welcome the machine that lightens the burdens of crores of men living in cottages and reduces man’s labour..... If we could have electricity in every village home, I shall not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with electricity.... I have no objection if all things required by my country could be produced with the

¹ *Harijan*, November 2, 1934.

² *Ibid.*, January 28, 1939.

labour of 30,000 instead of that of three crores. But these three crores must not be rendered idle or unemployed.”¹

In Gandhiji’s scheme the machine is required to serve man and not *vice versa*. He would like to derive all its advantages without the consequent evils.

Lastly it must be remembered that Gandhism has different values from those of Socialism. It gives greater importance to spiritual and moral values than to leisure. Gandhiji does not aim at purely material benefit but at the strengthening of character and development of personality.² He believes that hard and strenuous life is necessary for building up a highly spiritual life. Idleness and luxury degrade the human being. “God created ‘man,’ he writes, “to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and I dread the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our foodstuffs, out of a conjurer’s hat.”³

¹ *Gandhiji, His life and Work.* (Edited by D. G. Tendulkar and others.) pp. 88-89.

² J. C. Kumarappa, “Social and Political Ideas of Mahatma Gandhi” in *India*, Vol. II, Oct-Dec. 1946, No. 4, pp. 358-60.

³ *Harijan*, May 16, 1936.

Gandhiji is not a mere visionary. He is a man of action. He does not rest content with drawing ideal schemes of social re-organisation, but is always ready to put them into practice. It is for this reason that Gandhiji lays great emphasis on constructive programmes. It is through this that he wishes to overcome violence that prevails in society today. His constructive programme is really non-violence in action.

"Here it may take the shape of a renovated scheme of basic education, there a revivified plan of economic uplift through Khaddar, elsewhere it may be a rejuvenated attempt at national unity through the removal of untouchability. All these are non-violence in action. Because the foreign articles we use starve our poor fellow creatures in the villages, all the social disparities injure the very honour and self-respect of our Harijan brethren and all the educational labours of the prevailing system reconcile the mind to the rule of the foreigner and tend to consolidate his moral and social conquest of the nation along with his political or territorial

conquest."¹

The All India National Education Board, the All India Spinners' Association, and the All-India Harijan Board, which are all affiliated to the Indian National Congress, are meant to carry out the constructive programme of Gandhiji. The first seeks to reconstruct the socio-economic life, the second the ethical life, and the third the industrial life of the country.²

Gandhism, however, is not just a series of disjointed maxims of policy or a series of immediate reforms and remedial measures. There is a philosophy behind it. The Gandhian programme of reconstruction is socio-economic or economic-political-religious in its nature.³ This is clear from the 18-point programme which he has placed before the country: (1) inter-communal unity, (2) removal of untouchability, (3) prohibition, (4) Khadi (handspun cloth), (5) other village industries, (6) village sanitation, (7) new or Basic Education, (8) adult education, (9) up-

¹ B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *Gandhi and Gandhism*, Vol. II, pp. 400-01.

² *Ibid.*, p. 403.

³ J. J. Anjaria "The Gandhian Approach of Indian Economics," in *The Indian Journal of Economics*, pp. 357-67.

lift of women, (10) education in health and hygiene, (11) cultivation of provincial languages, (12) propagation of Rashtra Bhasha or National Language, (13) economic equality, (14) organisation of Kisans (the peasantry), (15) labour on a non-violent basis, (16) service of Adivasis (original inhabitants such as Bhils, Gonds or others, variously described as Hill Tribes or aborigines), (17) care of lepers, and (18) constructive work by students for one year which may be spread over their whole study. This constructive programme is the truthful and non-violent way of winning independence.¹

Since the beginning of the twentieth century

Indian Nationalism and Non-Violence there has been a wave of nationalism throughout the length and breadth of India.

The nationalist sentiment has found expression in poetry, economics, politics, education, religion and society. Mahatma Gandhi, who has been the most important man in the political field in the last quarter of a century, has done more than anybody else to intensify the sentiment of nationalism.² It is through the realization of national consciousness

¹ M. K. Gandhi, *Constructive Programme—Its Meaning and Place*, pp. 1-30.

² M. S. Vairanpillai, *Are We Two Nations?* pp. 162-94.

and national power that true service could be rendered to mankind and to civilization as a whole.

A healthy kind of nationalism is consistent with the principle of love. Gandhiji has no craze for internationalism of the type which is merely an ideal, far removed from the practical realities of life. According to Mahatma Gandhi one cannot become an internationalist without being a nationalist.

“Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when people belonging to different countries have organised themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil.”¹

Mahatma Gandhi’s nationalism is consistent with the principle of love because it is not aggressive. He writes:

“My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that in all humility I confine my attention to the

¹ *Young India*, June 18, 1925.

land of birth, but it is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. *Sic utere tuo non alienum laedas*¹ is not merely a legal maxim, but it is a grand doctrine of life. It is the key to a proper practice of *Ahimsa* or love.”²

True peace and security can be established in the world when people serve their own country in a spirit of dedication and love without being selfish and aggressive towards other nations. It is only non-violent nationalism which will save the world from the present chaos. Gandhiji writes :

“After nearly fifty years of public life, I am able to say today that my faith in the doctrine that the service of one’s nation is not inconsistent with the service of the world has grown. It is a good doctrine. Its acceptance alone will ease the situation in the world and stop the mutual jealousies between nations inhabiting this globe of ours.”³

¹ “So use your own property as not to injure the rights of another.”

² *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 344.

³ *Harijan*, November 17, 1933.

In consonance with this spirit of patriotism Mahatma Gandhi has therefore advocated *Swadeshi* (which literally means "belonging to one's own country"). This principle of Swadeshi is applied to the field of religion, politics and economics. He defines Swadeshi as "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote." The application of this principle in the field of religion means that one should restrict oneself to one's ancestral religion. If it is defective, the defects should be purged but there is no need to change one's religion. In the domain of politics, indigenous institutions should be developed.

Similarly, in the field of economics people should use only those things which are produced in the immediate surroundings and thus support local industries. India can regain its lost position by revivifying its own religion, political institutions and industries.¹

It should, however, be made clear that Gandhiji does not want to erect barriers around India to resist cultural influence from outside. He only

¹ *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 343.

emphasizes that there can be no true appreciation of other cultures without imbibing and assimilating one's own culture.¹ He writes :

"I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house, as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave."²

To understand the two basic principles of Gandhian philosophy is also to understand his scheme of social organisation. It is an application of the principles of truth and non-violence. His idea of Swaraj or self-government includes the so-called 'upper classes' but the real purpose of the Indian struggle is to awaken the masses. "Real Swaraj will not come by the acquisition of authority by a few, but by the acquisition of the capacity to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by educating the

¹ *Young India*, September 1, 1921.

² *Ibid.*, June, 1, 1921.

masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.¹ He also stated: "The Swaraj of my—our—dream recognises no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be the monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of mōnied men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving, toiling millions."²

Though Gandhiji believes in the original *Varna* or caste system in Hinduism which was really meant to regulate social relations and conduct, he is against its present form which makes distinctions on the basis of social status. He therefore considers untouchability as "a heinous crime against humanity."³ In his scheme of self-government, there is therefore no room for untouchability.

He stands for a true democracy in which the rights of the common man will be respected. "Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke what-

¹ M. K. Gandhi, *Young India*, Jan. 29, 1925.

² *Ibid.*, May 1, 1930.

³ *Ibid.*, December 8, 1920.

soever. I have no desire to exchange 'King Log for King Stork.'"¹ Self-government for Gandhiji therefore means "a continuous effort to be independent of government control whether it is foreign government or whether it is national."² As Gandhiji wishes to achieve this freedom through constructive work, he rejects both anarchy and dictatorship. "If we wish to achieve Swaraj through truth and non-violence, gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way. This rules out the deliberate creation of an anarchical state for the overthrow of the established order in the hope of throwing up from within a dictator who would rule with a rod of iron and produce order out of disorder."³ The constructive programme therefore becomes the real means of achieving economic as well as political freedom.

Gandhiji, however, is not enamoured of the western form of democracy with its universal voting for parliamentary representatives. He would give one vote to each of the seven hundred

¹ *Ibid.*, June 12, 1924.

² *Ibid.*, August 6, 1925.

³ *Harijan*, June 18, 1942.

thousand villages in India. The villages would elect their district administration, and the district administrations would elect the provincial administrations, and these in turn would elect a president who would be the national chief executive.¹ Gandhiji wishes to safeguard the freedom of the individual against the emergence of the all-powerful state. He therefore wishes to distribute power among the seven hundred thousand villages of India. "There will then be voluntary cooperation between these seven hundred thousand units, voluntary cooperation—not cooperation induced by Nazi methods. Voluntary cooperation will produce real freedom and a new order vastly superior to the new order in Soviet Russia."²

In evaluating Gandhiji's philosophy it must be remembered that he has not written a logical or coherent system of philosophy. Appraisal

It has to be constructed out of the statements and speeches which he made from time to time in different situations. In the second place, Gandhiji has been deeply influenced by the humanist idealism of India's

¹ Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, pp. 55-56.

² Fischer, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

past. This was inevitable for a person brought up in the atmosphere and tradition of Hindu religion.

The following discussion attempts to show that Gandhiji is not a dogmatist or traditionalist but shows a keen appreciation of the present condition of India and its future.

The whole of Gandhian philosophy is based on his conception of Truth. In order to understand his mind it is therefore necessary to go more deeply into his attitude towards Truth both in theory and action. According to Gandhiji, Truth or Reality reveals itself to man only gradually. "It is not given to man to know the whole Truth. His duty lies in living up to the truth as he sees it, and in doing so, to resort to the purest means, i.e., non-violence."¹ In the process of attaining Truth man may make mistakes. It does not harm his cause if he is prepared to learn from other's experience. In his lifetime Mahatma Gāndhi as a votary of Truth has several times retraced his steps when he saw that he had erred. He writes, "I am a humble but very earnest seeker after Truth. And in my search, take all fellow-

¹ *Harījan*, November 24, 1933.

seekers in uttermost confidence so that I may know my mistakes and correct them. I confess that I have often erred in my estimates and judgments.... And inasmuch as in every case I retraced my steps, no permanent harm was done.”¹ People who do not understand this experimental attitude of Gandhiji towards life and social problems have accused him of inconsistencies. But Gandhiji has never believed that he is in possession of Absolute Truth. It is only in a process of realisation. Mahatma Gandhi does not find any inconsistency in his action. “Inconsistency is only apparent. It appears so to many friends because of my responsiveness to varying circumstances. Seeming consistency may really be sheer obstinacy.”² Like “a social scientist and social inventor,” he has made experiments with the widespread and difficult problems of social, political and economic reconstruction of India. The greatness of Mahatma Gandhi lies in the fact that he has been able to devise methods and techniques which are peculiarly suited to the culture and mode of living of the Indian

¹ *Young India*, April 21, 1927.

² *Ibid.*, April 16, 1931.

people.¹ In fact, Mahatma Gandhi's technique of *Satyagraha* may be regarded as "the pragmatic methodology of all weaker races and classes."²

Mahatma Gandhi's attitude towards war may be taken as an example of this experimental approach towards problems. In 1899, when Mahatma Gandhi was in South Africa, war broke out between the English and the Boers. He considered it a golden opportunity for the British Indians inhabiting South Africa to vindicate their self-respect and readiness to suffer in the cause of the Empire. An Ambulance Corps was organised, in which Mahatma Gandhi enlisted himself as a volunteer.³ In 1918, Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the Indians to enlist in the army to help the Empire. He believed that it was only in this way that India would regain its lost manhood and qualify itself for *Swaraj* (self-government). Partnership in the Empire was still the goal of Indian nationalism at that time. "If the Empire perishes, with it perish our cherished aspirations," said Gandhiji.⁴ In 1940, Gandhiji was so adamant against making any compromise in his principle of non-violence that

¹ S. Radhakrishnan., *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 80-87.

² B. K. Sarkar., *Creative India*, p. 414.

³ Andrews, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-70.

⁴ *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 441-46.

he parted company with the Indian National Congress. The Working Committee of the Congress declared in a resolution:

“While the Working Committee holds that the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in their struggle for independence, the Committee cannot ignore the present imperfections and failings in this respect of the human elements they have to deal with, and the possible dangers in a period of transition and dynamic change, until the Congress has acquired non-violent control over the people in adequate measure and the people have imbibed sufficiently the lesson of organized non-violence. The committee have deliberated over the problem that has thus arisen and have come to the conclusion that they are unable to go to the full length with Gandhi-ji. But they recognise that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way, and therefore absolve him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue under the conditions at present prevailing in India

and the world in regard to external aggression and internal disorder.”¹

There is an apparent contradiction in Gandhiji’s attitude towards the first and the second World War. Gandhiji has often been criticised for this inconsistency. But the critics fail to appreciate that Gandhiji is not guided by abstract principles. Ideals have no meaning unless they take into account the existing conditions and changing forces. Replying to a critic about this inconsistency Gandhiji writes :

“Life is governed by a multitude of forces. It would be smooth sailing, if one could determine the course of one’s actions only by one general principle whose application at a given moment was too obvious to need even a moment’s reflection. But I cannot recall a single act which could be so easily determined.”²

What were the circumstances which moved Gandhiji to follow different courses of action during these wars? In the previous war, Gandhiji believed himself to be a citizen of the British

¹ *Harijan*, June 29, 1940.

² M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, p. 101.

Empire and as a dutiful citizen it was quite consistent with his religion of *Ahimsa* to offer his services to the Empire in the hour of its need. Consistent with his philosophy of love and truth, he thought that England's need should not be turned into India's opportunity.¹ In the second place, as a practical man Gandhiji also realised that in 1914-18, he had no status to resist participation in war.² The situation changed after the first World War was over. He began to lose faith in the good intentions of the British. In 1929, the All India Congress which held its session at Lahore passed the famous Independence Resolution. But Gandhiji was still willing to keep India as a partner in the British Commonwealth. In his famous speech at the Round Table Conference delivered before the Federal Structure Committee on September 14, 1930, he said:

“Time was when I prided myself on being and being called a British subject. I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject. I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject. But I have now aspired—and I still aspire—to be a citi-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

² M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, p. 95.

zen, not in the Empire but in a Commonwealth, in a partnership if possible; if God wills it, an indissoluble partnership but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another..... Either party should have the right to sever this connection.”¹

But there was no definite change in the British policy. Gandhiji’s whole spirit rebelled against British imperialism. When the second World War broke out, Britain’s case for asking India’s help in it was morally weak.

There was a glaring contradiction between Britain’s war aims and its imperialistic policy towards India which was not even formally consulted on the declaration of war. Gandhiji saw this and he wrote in anguish :

“India has every right to examine the implications of high sounding declarations about justice, preservation of democracy and freedom of speech and liberty. If a band of robbers have among themselves a democratic constitution in order to enable them to carry on their robbing operations more effectively, they do not deserve to be called a democracy

¹ *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 793.

..... Britain does not deserve to win the war on the ground of justice if she is fighting to keep her Asiatic and African possessions. I am not unaware of the tremendous change in Britain's economic policy that the acceptance of my proposal involves. But that change is a vital necessity, if this war is to have a satisfactory ending.”¹

There is no contradiction in Gandhiji's thought or action. Critics who find inconsistency in it judge it as static and absolute, whereas Gandhiji's whole philosophy is dynamic and evolving, varying with circumstances. Gandhiji says it in clear terms: “My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result is that I have grown from truth to truth.”² In fact, it is Gandhiji's sensitiveness to varying circumstances that has attracted to his movement people who do not apparently agree with his philosophy but who find irresistible logic in his action.³ Gandhiji

¹ Mahatma Gandhi, *My Appeal to the British*, p. 48.

² M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, p. 88.

³ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 254.

seeks Truth through the freedom of India. "I live for India's freedom and would die for it because it is part of Truth."¹ But in attaining this end he must also take into account the actual conditions and they are not the same at all times. In replying to a critic asking how his principle of *Ahimsa* was to be reconciled with his action or helping the cause of previous wars, he writes, "One's life is not a single straight line; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another."² In Gandhiji's philosophy action is not predetermined nor is it divorced from knowledge. It is for this reason that there is a certain flexibility in Gandhiji's thought and action. This appears to some people as opportunism or inconsistency. It is really a reconstruction and revaluation of values and ideals in the light of experience.

¹ *Young India*, April 3, 1924.

² M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, p. 67.

CHAPTER III

THE WARDHA SCHEME—AN ANALYSIS

As a spiritual and political leader of India Mahatma Gandhi was naturally concerned with education which is one of the central problems of politics. All his constructive programmes—social, political, economic and educational—are organically interconnected. Gandhiji himself writes:

“My life is indivisibly whole, and all my activities run into one another; and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind.”¹

For Gandhiji, social progress and educational reconstruction are therefore interrelated and react on each other. Educational reorganisation is necessary for bringing greater and greater freedom to the people of India in the social, political and economic spheres and this freedom in its turn will bring further improvement in education.

¹ *Harijan*, March 2, 1934.

By virtue of the India Act of 1935 which was inaugurated on April 1, 1937, the Congress ministries came into power in eight out of eleven provinces. This was the right opportunity for Mahatma Gandhi to reconstruct the educational system of India in accordance with his social and political ideas. He summed up his whole plan of education in "Two propositions":

- (1) "Primary¹ education extending over a period of seven years or longer, and covering all the subjects up to the matriculation standard except English, plus a vocation as the vehicle for drawing out the minds of boys and girls in all departments of knowledge, should take the place of what passes today under the name of primary, middle, and high school education.
- (2) "Such education taken as a whole can and

¹ By "primary" Gandhiji really means "basic"--a universal and compulsory system of education which will abolish the existing artificial distinction between primary, middle and high school education. He conceives "primary" education as a continuous, growing process without compartmental divisions.

must be self-supporting; in fact self-support is the acid test of its reality.¹

The fundamental features of the scheme as outlined by Mahatma Gandhi are:

- (1) Free and compulsory education for seven years.
- (2) Mother tongue to be the medium of instruction.
- (3) Process of education to centre around some form of manual and productive work in the shape of a craft, and
- (4) To be self-supporting to the extent of covering teachers' pay.

In explaining his scheme further, Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that his conception of education was neither mere literacy nor the mere learning of mechanical crafts. Education should aim at the highest physical, mental and spiritual development. "By education I mean," he writes, "an all-round drawing of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit."²

¹ *Educational Reconstruction* (A Collection of Gandhiji's Articles on the Wardha Plan and the Reports), p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Gandhiji believes that under the system advocated by him the children would produce marketable articles and if the State purchases these every school can be made self-supporting. For the first or even the second year's course, it may mean a partial loss, but during the total period of seven years, education should be self-supporting, i.e., it should cover the minimum salary of the teacher. Land, buildings, and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupils' labour.¹

Mahatma Gandhi is not dogmatic and he does not regard his ideas as gospel truth. At the conference which was invited to discuss the outline scheme, he said, "Before making the scheme compulsory and universal, we shall have to vindicate its truth in some experimental schools. If the scheme fails, no Mahatma shall be able to save it."² He entrusted the outline scheme to a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain for further scrutiny. The committee formulated the Plan and its report was later on approved by Gandhiji.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

² *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 96.

In the first chapter an attempt was made to show how the Western system of education which was imposed on the Indian society had failed to meet the most urgent and pressing needs of national life. This is corroborated by the Report of the Zakir Hussain Committee when it points out the defects of the present system:

- “It is neither responsive to the realistic elements of the present situation, nor inspired by any life-giving and creative ideal It has no conception of the new co-operative social order which education must help to bring into existence to replace the present competitive and inhuman régime based on exploitation and violent force.”¹
- The Wardha Scheme prepared under the direction of Mahatma Gandhi attempts to replace this system by a more dynamic and human system which will help to bring into existence a new era of planning and cooperation in India.
- Educational philosophy must give expression to the character of national life. Indian culture

Purpose of the Plan

¹ *Basic National Education*—Report of the Zakir Hussain Committee, p. 7.

has its own unique characteristics. It manifests itself in the form of the organised life of the people; expresses their needs and responds to changes in their cultural life. No educational plan can be effective unless it takes into account the specific local cultural pattern of the group for which the plan is meant.

The organization of education must therefore be conceived in national terms. In India, true education is impossible without nationalism, said Dr. Zakir Hussain, the chairman of the committee which prepared the plan.

“Nationalism there must be, or there can be no democracy in India. There must be the conception of a society living within known geographical limits, a society with its own history and traditions, its record of political and cultural achievements, its past determining its present and future. All this must exist not as an idea or a piece of information acquired and retained along with other matters as a part of useful knowledge; it must exist as a faith, as a political energy within each individual, unconsciously shaping his life and thought, and consciously

urging him to more and more perfect self-expression in endeavour, cooperation and service.”¹

India must build up a system which is suited to the social, economic, political and cultural needs of its own people. And in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, in India the word ‘national’ has come to connote ‘truth and non-violence.’² Indian education must, therefore, be built up within this frame of reference.

“Any scheme of education designed for Indian children will in some respects radically differ from that adopted in the West. For, unlike the West, in India the nation has adopted non-violence as the method of peace, for achieving all-round freedom. Our children will therefore need to be taught the superiority of non-violence over violence.”³

The educational system of a country must take as its starting point the pattern of the culture of that particular society. India has inherited its intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical values from

¹ Zakir Hussain, *Post-War Education in India*, p. 2.

² *Basic National Education*, Report of the Zakir Hussain Committee, Foreword by Mahatma Gandhi.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

its old civilization. Though new forces in India are at work and are interrelated with the economic and cultural forces of the world which cannot be ignored in any kind of planning, India has its distinct pattern of values and a distinct set of problems. These ideals and needs must be the core of educational planning. This is what Mahatma Gandhi means when he says:

“If we want to eliminate communal strife, and international strife, we must start with foundations pure and strong by rearing our younger generation on the education I have adumbrated. The plan springs out of non-violence.... We have to make our boys true representatives of our culture, our civilization, of the true genius of our nation. Europe is no example for us. It plans its programmes in terms of violence because it believes in violence. I would be the last to minimise the achievement of Russia, but the whole structure is based on force and violence. If India has resolved to eschew violence, this system of education becomes an integral part of the discipline.”¹

¹ *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 66.

What is the kind of society that Mahatma Gandhi visualises and for which he wants to prepare Indian children through this plan? A society based on truth and non-violence should necessarily be a democratic society in which a large number of people will have common values, numerous points of common interest, shared undertakings and experiences. In the second place, in a society based on non-violence, reliance will be placed on mutual interest rather than on coercion as a mode of control. And lastly, in such a society the evil of the social separation of the privileged classes and unprivileged classes, each living in a world by itself, will be removed. There will be a free intercourse between groups and individuals on the basis of equality and common interests—an essential condition for the continuous progress of society.

In explaining the implications of the new plan, the Zakir Hussain Committee pointed out:

“We are anxious that teachers and educationists who undertake this new educational venture should clearly realise the ideal of citizenship inherent in it. In modern India, citizenship is destined to become increas-

ingly democratic in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the country. The new generation must at least have an opportunity of understanding its own problems and rights and obligations. A completely new system is necessary to secure the minimum of education for the intelligent exercise of the rights and duties of citizenship.”¹

For building up a truly democratic society it is also essential that mutual understanding and habits of cooperative and mutually helpful living should be fostered among groups and individuals. The Wardha Scheme attempts to do this by introducing a common productive activity in the schools which will bring about interchange of thought and community of feeling. People will begin to feel that they are working along common lines and for a common purpose.

“No art or craft can be successfully practised without a previously settled plan and purpose for which the members of the school have to organise and discipline themselves.

¹ *Basic National Education*, pp. 11-12.

The teacher and the pupils have to cooperate in order to bring about the desired results. The labour and the craft principle therefore supplies the greatest impetus to democratic self-government in schools. It also provides opportunities for the cultivation of political and civic virtues under the expert leadership of the teacher.”¹

Writing about this plan, the Zakir Hussain Committee points out:

“This scheme is designed to produce *workers* who will look upon all kinds of useful work—including manual labour, even scavenging—as honourable, and who will be both able and willing to stand on their own feet. Such a close relationship of the work done at school to the work of the community will also enable the children to carry the outlook and attitudes acquired in the school environment into the wider world outside. Thus the new scheme which we are advocating will aim at giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal worth, dignity and efficiency, and will strengthen in them

¹ J. B. Kriplani, *The Latest Fad: Basic Education*, p. 60.

the desire for self-improvement and social service in a cooperative community. In fine, the scheme envisages the idea of a cooperative community, in which the motive of social service will dominate all the activities of children during the plastic years of childhood and youth.”¹

Education has a definite responsibility in The Principles of helping to create this new the Wardha Curri- cooperative society and in culum. helping the individual to adjust actively and intelligently to the new and changed environment. The curriculum, therefore, becomes one of the important means for realizing this objective. Each individual is born into a culture which is composed of a great variety of aspects such as physical, social, economic, aesthetic, and the like. They are more or less complex and interrelated. In the process of growth there is interaction between the individual and culture. In other words, the individual affects the environment and he is also affected by it. This process of interaction and adjustment between the individual and the environment goes

¹ *Basic National Education*, pp. 12-13.

on throughout life.

It is therefore appropriate that the syllabus of the Wardha Scheme should be built around three integrally related centres: (1) Physical Environment, (2) Social Environment, and (3) Craft Work. All the subjects are naturally coordinated with these centres which gives a unity to the syllabus.¹ Craft becomes the natural meeting point of both physical and social environment because man has conquered nature in and through work. In order to live he has directed most of his activities to bring the materials and forces of nature under the control of his purpose. Handicraft is "the process by which a man takes the raw material from nature, and with his skill and intelligence transforms it into an object of use for human society."² From the most basic needs of human beings to the highest accomplishments in the field of creative arts, one can see man's struggle to conquer nature through work. There is hardly any field of knowledge which is not related with craft. General Science,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

² *One Step Forward*, Report of the First Conference of Basic National Education, p. 96.

dealing with the physical environment; social science, dealing with the social environment; and creative and expressional arts, such as language and drawing, find their natural place when craft becomes the medium of education.¹

Experience as Basis
of Curriculum

In the Wardha Scheme, though the experiences are to be guided and controlled by the teacher to some extent, the chief emphasis of

the plan, however, is on children's personal experience. Knowledge and skills are not to be acquired for their own sake. They must be closely related to the needs of the child and his environment. Facts, information or ideas which have not been built upon personal experience have no meaning for the child and he cannot make any use of them. Learning should be based on units of experience reflecting the interests of the child or youth, or drawn from social life, but arranged on the plane of the learner's interest or comprehension. Keeping this point in view, the Plan points out:

"We have attempted to organise the subject matter into significant and comprehensive

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

units of experience which will, when mastered, enable the child to understand his environment better and to react to it more intelligently because they throw helpful light on the problems and conditions of life around him"¹.

In order that the child may get an adequate understanding of his culture and group life, it is essential that the curriculum should be composed of actual personal problems of living growing out of the pupil's individual and group interactions with the surrounding culture. Children will of course utilize subjects which contain all the accumulated social heritage but these will be related to their actual problems of living. In other words, learning of these subjects will arise out of the purposeful activities of the child. In emphasizing this aspect of the curriculum, the Wardha Scheme points out:

“For if subjects such as Social Studies and General Science are presented by the teachers as catalogues of facts to be passively accepted and learnt by the children, the whole

¹ *Basic National Education*, pp. 49-50.

object of the syllabus will be defeated, and they will entirely fail to appreciate the real nature of the correlation among various subjects. This can only be realised when they are acquired through real learning situations involving self-activity on children's part.”¹

Self-activity and Curriculum Self-activity has been emphasized by the Wardha Scheme because unless the child is interested in the project or learning enterprise and its outcome, he cannot be educated effectively. The child must whole-heartedly accept the enterprise as his own. Learning processes will always be functional and dynamic—moving towards a goal. The object of this new curriculum is to develop a spirit of scientific inquiry and problem consciousness so that the children may be able to formulate independent judgments. The Committee says :

“We have really attempted to draft an ‘activity curriculum’ which implies that our schools must be places of work, experi-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

mentation and discovery, not of passive absorption of information imparted at second hand.”¹

The Wardha Scheme has throughout emphasized that the function of the curriculum is not merely to help the child to a mere intellectual understanding of his surroundings and culture, but also to contribute to social progress. The school should set up situations which provide constant practice in social and cooperative living. It should encourage activities through which the child can make a personal contribution to group enterprise. Through actual participation in social activities, undertakings and experiences, the child should be made aware of the purpose of education which is to establish a better society—a democratic society. Education must further emphasize cooperative action instead of competitive individualism. The Wardha Scheme attempts to achieve this goal by introducing “the development in school of self-governing institutions and its organisation as a genuine cooperative community, involving mutual obligations and distribution

¹ *Basic National Education*, pp. 48-49.

of duties and responsibilities.”¹

The Plan provides a course for seven years for

Outline of the Plan the children between the ages of seven and fourteen. It is expected that during this period the child will acquire “the essential modicum of social and civic training.” The importance of pre-school education and the education of adolescents is realised by the committee, but in the present financial position of the country they do not consider it practicable to include them as a part of the compulsory scheme. The committee has, however, recommended that the nursery schools should be opened on a voluntary basis, aided by the state wherever possible. Similarly, the committee has expressed the wish that the period of compulsory education may be extended to the age of sixteen in order that the children may be fully equipped to play the rôle of citizens and bear their responsibilities.²

The course includes the following items :

After completing the full course, the child

(1) Basic Craft should have acquired sufficient skill to enable him to

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

² *Basic National Education*, pp. 57-58.

pursue the craft as an independent occupation.¹

Craft to be Basic There are three points which need to be made clear with regard to the selection and teaching of basic crafts. The craft chosen in a school should not be any craft, but a *basic* craft around which the different subjects of the curriculum can be grouped. "It should find natural points of correlation with important human activities and interests, and should extend into the whole content of the school curriculum."² Spinning in the cotton-growing areas; fruit and vegetable gardening in the areas where this industry flourishes; pottery in clayey regions; carpentry in the forest tracts; agriculture in the areas where land cultivation is the main occupation, etc., will be the suitable crafts. In choosing the craft, it should be borne in mind that the craft is intimately bound up with the life of the children.

Craft as Medium of Education The second point to be remembered about the basic craft is that it has to be taught as a medium of education and not primarily as a vocational craft.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

“The object of this new educational scheme is not primarily the production of craftsmen able to practise some craft *mechanically*, but rather the exploitation for educative purposes of the resources implicit in craft work. This demands that productive work should not only form a part of the school curriculum—its craft side—but should also inspire the method of teaching all other subjects. Stress should be laid on principles of cooperative activity, planning, accuracy, initiative, and individual responsibility in learning.”¹

Mahatma Gandhi himself has made this point very clear. He writes, “Every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today, but scientifically, i. e., the child should know the why and wherefore of every process.”²

The craft is really the core of the Wardha Scheme and not merely an additional subject added to the curriculum. In explaining this difference to a teacher who had only combined manual training with literary training, Gandhiji wrote:

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 11.

² *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 4.

“I am afraid you have not sufficiently grasped the principle that spinning, carding, etc., should be the means of intellectual training. What is being done there is that it is a supplementary course to the intellectual course. I want you to appreciate the difference between the two. A carpenter teaches me carpentry. I shall learn it mechanically from him and as a result I shall know the use of various tools but that will hardly develop my intellect. But if the same thing is taught to me by one who has taken a scientific training in carpentry, he will stimulate my intellect too. Not only shall I then have become an expert carpenter, but also an engineer. For, the expert will have taught me mathematics, also told me the difference between various kinds of timber, the place where they come from, giving me thus a knowledge of geography and also a little knowledge of agriculture. He will also have taught me to draw models of my tools, and given me a knowledge of elementary geometry and mathematics.”¹

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

The committee also endorsed the view of Mahatma Gandhi that under ^{Self-Supporting Basis of the Plan} this plan the schools should be able to cover the major portion of their running expenses through their craft work. Apart from its financial implications, this measure will provide a check which will ensure thoroughness and efficiency in the work of the students and teachers.

The reason why hand-spinning has been given such a prominent place in this plan is that it is the one industry which can employ an unlimited number of people and with a minimum of outlay. It has all the natural advantages of raw material and moreover it has a long tradition behind it. It will further protect the villagers from economic exploitation by foreign countries as also by big industrialists.¹

It is an indisputable fact that the mother tongue is an indispensable part of the curriculum. It is a part of the mental equipment which helps the individual in participating in the world about him. In India, the local provincial

⁽²⁾ Languages....
Mother Tongue

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

languages have been so much neglected in the past that the Wardha Scheme has considered it essential to stress the point that the mother tongue should not only be the medium of education but it should also have an important place in the curriculum. Language is one of the important cultural institutions which contains all the accumulated wisdom, hopes and aspirations of the people and the educational system can afford to neglect it only at the risk of social collapse.

The Wardha Scheme takes a functional view of the language. It has creative as well as utilitarian values. Through language the child should be able to classify and clarify his experience. This can be done only through using the content of social experience. In taking up this position, the committee has pointed out:

“The teacher must organize his oral work as well as his reading material around the actual but growing life and interests of his children so that they may actually grow.... This suggests not only a principle for the selection of topics in the literary readers, but also stresses the close connection of the mother tongue with craft work, social studies

and village life and activities. The method of teaching must, therefore, be such as will give the child a mastery of his mother tongue as a tool not only for learning but for use in actual life situations.”¹

The only language which can serve as a *lingua franca* for the whole of India

Hindustani

for inter-provincial contacts

and communication is Hindustani. The Wardha Scheme has therefore included Hindustani as a compulsory subject in the curriculum in order that children when they grow up might cooperate with their fellow-countrymen all over India and develop a national consciousness.

One important change that the Wardha Scheme has introduced in the

English Excluded
from Basic Education

educational system of India is
that English has been eliminat-

ed from the Basic Education curriculum.

Mathematics is another indispensable subject
for the curriculum. Numbers

(3) Mathematics

and measurement have ori-

ginated like language in the relationships between
individuals. Social intercourse is possible only

¹ Basic National Education, pp. 51-52.

when there is some common understanding touching matters in which quantity and space forms are involved. It is an essential art of living together. Keeping this point in view, the Wardha Scheme says :

- “The objective is to develop in the pupil the capacity to solve speedily the ordinary numerical and geometrical problems arising in connection with his craft and with his home and community life. Pupils should also gain a knowledge of business method and book keeping.”¹

Social Studies have been placed along with other subjects, but a careful analysis reveals that the syllabus of history, geography, civics, and current affairs is framed to meet the needs of changing Indian society and to focus attention on those ideals which Indians have inherited and on the experience of contemporary society.

All educational planning necessarily involves some choice of values ; and social studies are one of the important means of realising these. The Wardha Scheme does not aim at mere intellec-

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 18.

tual development but also at developing definite social attitudes and convictions. It expects educators to inculcate these values. It does not necessarily mean any imposition of conclusions. Dangers of indoctrination can be avoided by allowing the pupils to exercise their intelligence.

The Wardha Scheme has recommended that "emphasis should be laid on the ideals of love, truth and justice, of cooperative endeavour, national solidarity, and the equality and brotherhood of man.... Stories of the great liberators of mankind and their victories of peace should find a prominent place in the curriculum. Emphasis should be laid on lessons drawn from life showing the superiority of truth and non-violence and its concomitant virtues over violence and deceit."¹

In the second place, social science, by its intrinsic nature, should give a picture of the present in which the children live and work and also of the future which is emerging. This is what the Zakir Hussain Committee means when

¹ *Basic National Education*, pp. 20-21.

in explaining the objectives of the Social Studies curriculum, it says :

“The history of Indian national awakening combined with a living appreciation of India’s struggle for social, political and economic freedom should prepare the pupils to bear their share of the burden joyfully and to stand the strain and stress of the period of transition.”¹

Children should be made aware of the conflicts and contradictions which exist in the social and political life of the present Indian society. They should, for example, understand the relationship of the property owner and the worker; the Zemindar and the peasant; the difference between the extravagant and luxurious lives of the princes, Zemindars and property owners and the lives of the starving millions of India; the privileges of the caste-Hindus and their injustice towards untouchables; and the struggle of the masses for social, economic and political freedom and the high-handedness of autocratic governments. The younger generation will have to tackle these problems and work out their solution in a peaceful

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

and harmonious way. They are therefore entitled to an impartial account of these conflicts.

In the third place, in order that India may play its due rôle in the world today, it is necessary that children should develop a strong national consciousness and have a vision of the future India. It should therefore be one of the objectives of Social Studies to inculcate in children "the love of the motherland, reverence for its past, and a belief in its future destiny as the home of a united, cooperative society based on love, truth and justice." National consciousness should also be developed through the celebration of national festivals and of the 'National Week.' The Committee has, however, warned the educators that "care should be taken to prevent pride in the past from degenerating into an arrogant and exclusive nationalism."¹

All the subjects in the field of Social Studies have a definite social meaning. Geography is not a mere study of the plant, animal and human life; weather phenomena; maps; means of transport and communication and occupation. These must be studied with the object of developing "in the pupil a

¹ *Basic National Education*, pp. 19-20.

proper understanding of his social and geographical environment; and to awaken the urge to improve it.”¹ India has great potential natural resources. Geography should aim at teaching children not only how this national wealth may be developed, but also how it may be utilised for common purposes.

Similarly through the study of civics, children should not only get acquainted with self-governing institutions but should also learn to exercise their rights as citizens in a democratic India.

“The pupils should become acquainted with the public utility services, the working of the panchayat and the cooperative society, the duties of the public servants, the constitution of the District Board or Municipality, the use and significance of the vote, and with the growth, and significance of representative institutions.....Self-governing institutions should be introduced in the school.”²

The plan does not provide for religious instruction for any denomination.

No Religious Instruction	It is common to all children —Hindus, Muslims, Parsees,
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¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Christians and other communities. Religion is the private concern of the individual and not a function of the public school.

General science would include Nature Study,

(5) General Science Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Hygiene, Physical Culture, Chemistry and a knowledge of the stars. In the Wardha Scheme the study of science has also a social purpose. Science should be applied to the service of mankind. It should also enable the pupils to form "habits of accurate observation and of testing experience by experiment"; and what is really significant in the plan is that it introduces children "to the more important incidents in the lives of the great scientists whose sacrifices in the cause of truth make a powerful appeal to the growing mind."¹ The study of science should not only help the child to discover truth but also lead him to a faith in the scientific method.

It is not expected that all children will

(6) Music and Drawing receive formal training in music, but they must all (except those who have any objection to learning music) join in group or choral singing.

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 23.

In making a selection of national and folk songs, preference should be given to those which have an inspiring effect on the minds of children.

In teaching Drawing, special emphasis should be given in later stages to its practical side—design, decoration and mechanical drawing, so that children may make use of them in their everyday life and may beautify their surroundings.

It would appear from the above discussion that the reconstructed curriculum of the Wardha Scheme has three important aspects:

(1) It has a definite social orientation. In all the fields of study emphasis has been placed on developing social and cooperative attitudes so that a child may become a fit citizen of the new society which will be based on cooperation and non-violence. The whole curriculum is planned to bring out and strengthen these qualities.

(2) There is a definite stress on the practical aspect of education. In India where poverty is so great and where people have to struggle for bare existence, it is no wonder that cultural values should be subordinated to the basic needs of human life. True education should be organised, coordinated and integrated around

dominant interests. In India, at the present moment, "the dominant interest is twofold: the promotion of livelihood including the standard of living in the comprehensive sense of the term, and the inculcation of civic responsibility."¹ It is therefore the special merit of the Wardha Scheme that the curriculum satisfies the needs and interests of the present Indian Society. It would, however, be a mistake to call it narrow or materialistic. Mahatma Gandhi rightly points out:

"To the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of beauty in such a way as to see Truth in it. Show them Truth first and they will see Beauty afterwards.... Whatever can be useful to starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today the vital things of life, and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow."²

It is only through experiences of the basic needs of human beings that the child is ready for larger and broader experiences of life.

¹ T. Haridas Mazumdar, "Contemporary Educational Policies," in *The Social Frontier*, December, 1938, Vol. V, p. 80.

² *Young India*, November 20, 1924.

(3) The curriculum definitely aims at developing national consciousness. The direct object of the Plan is national society. But this does not imply narrow nationalism or aggressive imperialism.

Evaluation of the Plan From the *psychological* standpoint, education through crafts or occupations maintains a balance between the intellectual and practical phases of experience.¹ When the child is working at a basic craft or occupation, he is exercising his physical powers—the eyes, hands, etc. But while he is doing this, he is also developing his practical or executive side. Being engaged in craft work, the child is really working out a project which involves a purpose, planning, experimenting, and reflection. Thus by learning through basic crafts the child will train his senses and also discipline his thought. In this method, as Achârya Kriplani has pointed out, “books are not dispensed with but they will be re-thought, re-invented, and re-written by the pupils doing creative work in cooperation with the teacher and one another.”²

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 9.

² Kriplani, *op. cit.*, p.

In the second place, the basic craft will stimulate the spontaneous interest of children without allowing it to degenerate into mere excitement or pleasure. By following the basic craft which is also the occupation of the community, their interest will not only be enduring but will also be related to a worthy end—the service of the nation. The Wardha Scheme clearly visualised this when it said, “Even during the period of school education, they will feel that they are directly and personally cooperating in the great experiment of national education.”¹

From the *pedagogical* point of view also the plan is highly commendable. The plan, which suggests that “youths should be thrown into the matrix of real work at school, where they should learn to grapple with obstinate raw materials, like cotton and wool and wood, and the earth as the field of agriculture,” will certainly equip them with more valuable and effective knowledge than that which imparts knowledge mechanically and passively through books. It will make learning a more purposeful process, giving children a sense of reality in the school.

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 13.

When they identify themselves with the purpose of the activity, there will be a genuine effort and sustained attention which in turn will develop in them habits of critical inquiry and judgment. In other words, they will become seekers after truth.

It will also develop the moral qualities which are required in a non-violent resister. Prolonged, habitual and understood manual work has the same effect as military training. It develops habits of obedience, self-respect and self-reliance, tenacity of will, sense of unity with others, endurance of common hardships, sense of order and cooperation, energy, courage, equanimity, and practice in handling moral equivalents of weapons.¹

The Plan has a great advantage from the *economic* point of view also. In India, the child ordinarily starts working in the family at the age of six or seven, looking after sheep or cattle in the grazing fields or his own younger brothers or sisters at home while the parents work in the field.

¹ Richard B. Gregg, *A Discipline for Non-Violence*, pp. 8-20.

(Note:—The author has had first-hand knowledge of *Satyagraha* and has lived in Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram. The pamphlet is recommended by Mahatma Gandhi in his foreword to the book.)

Any compulsory system of education which does not make an economic appeal to the villagers of India will meet with great resistance. In the schools run in accordance with the Wardha Scheme the parents realise that while being educated their children are also earning and increasing their productive capacity.

From the *social* point of view, the Wardha Scheme attempts to remove the cleavage which exists at present in Indian society between the learned and unlearned—the leisured and the labouring class. “The introduction of such practical productive work in education, to be participated in by all the children of the nation, will tend to break down the existing barriers of prejudice between manual and intellectual workers, harmful alike for both.”¹ It will help in developing a truly democratic society in which useful service and worthy leisure will be equally distributed. It strikes at the root of the prevailing view of education which holds that liberal or cultural education which is confined to the upper strata of society cannot have anything in common with the education of the masses which must necessarily

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 10.

be useful or practical. It eradicates untouchability—the greatest evil in Hindu society—by recognising all kinds of useful work, including scavenging, as honourable.

Further, this Plan will, to a great extent, resolve the social conflict in, and do away with the evils of, the existing economic situation. Through this reconciliation of liberal and practical education, the worker in the field and factory will no more take his work to be a drudgery but will do it with interest, as he will understand the intellectual and social significance of his vocation. Social studies and training in science will give him an understanding of the situation and also the initiative to improve it. The worker will thus acquire the ability to share in social control. On the other hand, through this kind of education, the members of the privileged class will also gradually discover cultural values in useful work. They will, further, have a greater sense of social responsibility and sympathy for labour.

The author of the Plan, who wishes to bring about a more equitable and enlightened social order through the method of non-violence, is conscious of the deeper significance of the Plan. He writes:

“My plan to impart primary education through the medium of village handicrafts like spinning and carding, etc., is thus conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationships between the classes.... And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war.”¹

It must also be pointed out here that there is an identity of ideals and purposes between the Gandhian Philosophy of truth and non-violence and the Wardha Scheme. In fact, as Acharya Kriplani has pointed out, the Wardha Scheme is “the coping stone of Gandhiji’s socio-political edifice.”² It is to prepare the child for a social order which will be based upon non-violence against violence, cooperation against competition, and service of society against exploitation. It attempts to build

¹ *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 32.

² Kriplani, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

up a social structure which will do away with dualism between theory and practice, knowledge and action, learning and doing, and labour and leisure.¹

The Wardha Scheme has a distinct kind of underlying moral philosophy which is consistent with Gandhiji's idea of truth. For working out this Plan, people must therefore have faith in the method of intelligence which creates understanding, mutual tolerance and sympathy among different individuals and groups. It will not work in a society where this method is ruled out. In warning the Marxist who might use this plan for their purpose without having faith in its philosophy or method, Acharya Kriplani points out:

“Let them know that they cannot at their sweet will cut off items of programme and graft them on to other ideologies. They cannot have an ounce of non-violence and dilute it with a bucketful of Bolshevism. Such procedure will not work. It will fail. They cannot, for instance, talk of non-violence and encourage peasant agita-

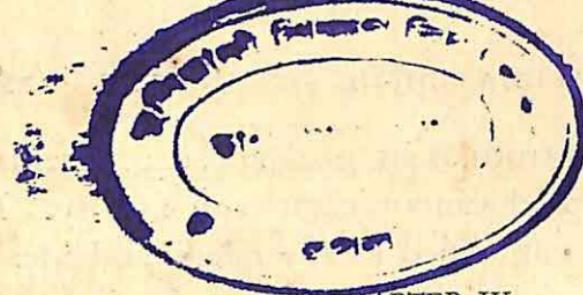
¹ K.G., Saiyidain, “Basic Education,” *The New Era*, March, 1946, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 56.

tion and industrial strife of the Western type, on the specious plea that strife already exists and is not of their creation..... They may for want of advice of their own accept Basic Education, but they will so mutilate it that it will not work. Let them know that such opportunist conformity will not strengthen their own ideology or programmae but will be demoralizing, if not for the leaders, surely for the rank and file. Let them also realize that in the world today there are two distinct ideologies and two revolutionary principles, the one advocated by Gandhiji and the other derived from Marx and worked out by the Bolsheviks. These two ideologies are separated by an unbridgeable gulf. They are based upon diametrically opposite moralities and philosophies of life.”¹

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that the Wardha Scheme aims to meet the needs and ideals of the present Indian society. It is to prepare the children for a new era which is emerging. There can, therefore, be no finality about the plan. A

¹ Kriplani, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

plan which has truth as its goal and experimentation as its method cannot claim any finality. It will have to be modified as the needs and ideals are re-defined and re-interpreted in the light of experience and in view of social changes.



CHAPTER IV

THE WARDHA SCHEME AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

Village handicrafts are the core of the Wardha Scheme. The whole The Problem of curriculum of Basic Education Cottage Industries is correlated with the craft. The craft is not merely an additional subject added to the curriculum but it is the medium of education.

The plan recommends the following as the basic crafts for various schools: (a) spinning, (b) carpentry, (c) agriculture, (d) fruit and vegetable gardening, (e) leather work, (f) any other craft for which local and geographical conditions are favourable and which helps in covering the major portion of the school expenditure.

It is further recommended that even where an industry other than spinning and weaving or agriculture is the basic craft, the pupils should attain a minimum knowledge of carding and spinning with the *takli*, and a practical acquaintance

with elementary agricultural work in the local area.¹

Mahatma Gandhi gives special emphasis to education through a craft as he believes that, apart from its educational value, it is in this kind of education that the revival of cottage industries and the resuscitation of villages lie. Why does Mahatma Gandhi lay so much emphasis on the revival of cottage industries in an industrial age? Does he want to "turn the clock back" and lead the people to a "medieval" age, or is he striving to attain values which the industrial age has lost? To answer this question, an examination of the economic and social conditions of present-day India is necessary.

When the British came to India, a large portion of the Indian population was engaged in various local industries. It was never the policy of the East India Company to foster existing Indian industries. British statesmen in the early years of the nineteenth century did all they could to promote British industries at the cost

Analysis of Socio-economic Situation

¹ *Basic National Education*, Report of the Zakir Hussain Committee, p. 16.

of Indian industries.¹ India was thus reduced from the state of a manufacturing to that of an agricultural country.

“The gradual conquest and consolidation of British power in India accompanied a complete reversal of the commercial relations between India and England. The balance of trade which had been in favour of India until the close of the eighteenth century now gradually began to turn against her..... The year 1800 saw a revolution in India’s economy. India was now well started on the road to transformation from the industrial workshop of the world to one of its richest raw material producing regions.... By 1800 the disparity between population and resources and the overcrowding of agriculture, with its inevitable consequences of unemployment and poverty on a scale unparalleled in any modern civilised community represented new features introduced into the economic scene of India unfamiliar in the past.”²

¹ R. C. Dutta, *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, pp. 195-269.

² Radhakamal Mukerji, *The Economic History of India, 1600 to 1800*, pp. 181-83.

While considering the present condition of India, it must be remembered in the first place that the overwhelming majority of the Indian people still live in villages. The following Table¹ gives the percentages of rural and urban population:

TABLE IV

The Percentages of Rural and Urban Population of India

Census Year	Rural	Urban
1872	91.28	8.12
1881	90.59	9.41
1891	90.54	9.46
1901	90.21	7.71
1911	90.65	9.35
1921	89.70	10.30
1931	89.00	11.00
1941	87.28	12.8

The Table given above shows not only that the majority of the Indian people still live in villages, but that during the last 70 years there has been very little progress towards urbanization.

In the second place, it must be borne in mind that the majority of people still follow agricultural occupations. In 1931, of the total number of persons following occupations, 65

(2) Rural Occupations Continue

people still follow agricultural occupations. In 1931, of the

¹ S. Chandrasekher, *India's Population*, p. 29.

per cent were engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits, and only 10.3 per cent in industry.¹ Moreover, out of the total number of industrial workers only 15 per cent were working in factories. Factory labour is mostly found concentrated in a few industrial centres (more than 60 per cent is to be found in the two provinces of Bombay and Bengal), while labour engaged in small-scale and cottage industries is more evenly distributed over all the provinces of India. These facts are enough to show that small-scale and cottage industries are important constituents even now of Indian economy.²

Cottage industries are such a vital part of Indian economy that they have been able to survive in the face of factory competition. The Indian Industrial Commission which made a survey of the industrial conditions in India in 1916-18 concluded that

“Cottage industries are a very important feature in the industrial life of India; that they are by no means so primitive as they are usually depicted; and that there is no

¹ S. Chandrasekhar, *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

² P. C. Jain, *Industrial Problems of India*, p. 65.

real ground for belief that they are generally in a decadent condition. We have been unable to obtain accurate statistics regarding the actual number of workers in the various cottage industries, but in every town they still form a large percentage of the population, and they are to be found in almost every village, so that their numbers are still vastly larger than those of the operatives employed in organised industries.”¹

These industries have survived so far “because of their ability to satisfy the strongly marked local demands for special designs.” The Commission were of the opinion that if the Departments of Industries work in cooperation with some business agency, “they will find it a ready means of introducing the products of both existing and improved cottage industries to extensive markets.”²

In the third place, it should be noted that during the last thirty years there has been a gradual decline in the relative proportion

(3) Decline in Industrial Employment

¹ *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, 1916-18*, pp. 162-63.

² *Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, op. cit.*, pp. 166-67.

of industrial employment to the total working population, as is shown in the following Table:

TABLE V

*Decline in the Proportion of Industrial Workers
to the Total Population in India*

		1911	1921	1931	1941 (est.)
Population (in millions)	..	315	319	353	400
Working population ..	..	149	146	156	170
Persons employed in industries (in millions) ..	..	17.5	15.7	15.3	16
Percentage of workers in industries to the working population ..	..	11.0	11.0	10.0	9.4
Percentage of industrial workers to the total population ¹		5.5	4.9	4.3	4.0

Since 1914 there has been a rapid development of factory industries in India. The cotton industry has grown quite fast. In 1913 there were about 5.8 million spindles and 85,000 looms. In 1941, there were over 10 million spindles and over 200,000 looms. India has a virtual monopoly of jute production in the world. The sugar industry practically supplies all the needs of India.

¹ Radhakamal Mukerji, *Food Planning for Four Hundred Millions*, p. 206.

In 1931 she had 31 sugar mills producing a little less than 160,000 tons, but by the outbreak of the World War II she had over 150 mills producing about 1.25 million tons, and her imports dropped from over one million tons to a few thousand. There has been an increase in the production of iron and steel also. Pig iron production was estimated to have reached 2 million tons, and steel production about 1.25 million tons. Other industries which had shown significant development before the World War II were paper, glass, cement, pottery, tanning, rubber, and chemicals.¹

These statistics clearly show that in India the employment index has not kept pace with the production index. It is therefore not very likely that the development of large-scale industries alone will solve the problem of full employment, especially in the face of the increasing pressure of population, as shown in the following Table:

¹ S. Warren Thompson, *Population and Peace in the Pacific*, pp. 240-42.

TABLE VI

Comparison between the Figures of the Total Population of India in 1941 and those of Earlier Censuses¹

Year	Population in thousands	Total Increase	Per Cent
1891	279,446	29,321	11.8
1901	283,872	4,426	1.2
1911	303,013	19,141	6.7
1921	305,693	2,680	0.9
1931	338,119	32,426	10.6
1941	388,998	50,879	15.0

In the fourth place, as the decades have passed, unemployment has increased in India, as the following Table² shows:

TABLE VII

Unemployment in India

Year	Number of Able-Bodied Adult Males between 10 and 60 (in millions)	Number of Economic Inactives among them (in millions)	Percentage
1901	103	7	7.1
1911	110	8	7.6
1921	112	11	10.3
1931	124	17	14.2

¹ East India Census 1941, Cmd 6435.

² Radhakamal Mukerji, *Races, Lands and Food*, pp. 56-57.

In this Table, the female population has been excluded from both the employable and the working groups because of the inaccuracy of the census returns in this respect. Women are engaged in agricultural operations spasmodically, and there is a general desire to discount their work. The percentage of the unemployed among the male population has just doubled in the last forty years.

In the fifth place, it has to be remembered that the standard of living of (5) Low Standard of Living India's population is very low. Shah and Kambatta,¹ two of India's leading economists whose estimates have been generally accepted, put the average income per head for the period 1900-01 to 1920-21 at Rs. 74 per annum. The latest unofficial estimate put the annual per capita income in 1931 at Rs. 62, with a margin error of 6 per cent.²

But these figures do not give any idea of the actual share received by each individual, and its relation to his needs. Shah also calculated the distribution of the national wealth and he

¹ Shah and Kambatta, *The Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India*, p. 201.

² V. K. R. V. Rao, *National Income of British India in 1931-32*, p. 185.

found that two-thirds of the community received per head half the average income; while 1 per cent enjoyed more than a third of the national wealth.¹ This means that for 66 per cent, or the majority, of the population, any gross figure of the average national income per head must be exactly halved to represent what it actually gets. In other words, if the average gross national income per head is taken to be Rs. 62, or \$ 18.60 per year, the true gross income for 66 per cent of the population would be Rs. 31, or \$ 9.30 per head per year. What do these figures mean in terms of living conditions? The leading Indian economists, Shah and Kambatta express it as follows :

“The average Indian income is just enough either to feed two men in every three of the population, (or give them all two in place of every three meals they need), on condition that they all consent to go naked, live out of doors all the year round, have no amusement or recreation, and want nothing else but food, and that the lowest, the coarsest, the least nutritious.”²

¹ K. T. Shah, and Others, *The Economic Background*, p. 12.

² Shah and Kambatta, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

The main purpose of economic planning should be directed not only to improve the income and standard of living of the average person in India, but also to ensure an equitable distribution of the produce of industry among the people of India. This can be achieved without violence only through small-scale industries which will not require a large capital or costly implements to put into operation. "As far as circumstances in our country go, decentralised methods are the only remedy for the ills we [suffer from, including widespread poverty."¹ This does not certainly mean that all machinery is to be eschewed. What we need is simple machinery which will be such as will minimise drudgery and increase the efficiency of the individuals, but at the same time, will not provide room for exploitation. "There is no objection to machinery as such. If there is any objection, it is to such machinery as has been devised to concentrate the profits into a few hands."² There is, of course, no alternative to the centralisation of such key industries as public utilities, communications, the produc-

¹ J. C. Kumarappa, *Why the Village Movement?*, pp.

150-51.

² J. C. Kumarappa, *op. cit.*, 72-73.

tion of power, the exploitation of mines, quarries, and forests.

In the sixth place, it must be kept in mind that

(6) Seasonal Un-
employment

the conditions of our agricul-
ture leave the cultivators out
of employment for several

months in the year. The problem is to provide work for the agriculturists who remain unemployed for a part of the year.

"The cottage industries have some special characteristic advantages of their own which the workshops lack and which are particularly true of our country.... The industry becomes usually the second string to the bow of the agriculturist. Moreover, as the industry is carried on in the midst of the family, the artisans can work longer than an apprentice in a workshop and factory does. The women also in the interval of their domestic work assist the artisans materially in the easier processes of the industry. The artisan thus finds an energetic support not only in the collaboration of the members of his family, but also in the moral element, which is the consequence

of the work in his home.”¹

It must be remembered that India is primarily an agricultural country. Out of 100 Indians seventy-two work on the land and about 90 live in villages. “Even if we do go at a breakneck speed in the direction of large-scale industry, our population is growing so fast that after ten years, even if our industries are able to absorb 20 millions more men, there will still be 400 millions left on the land.”² From this one thing is clear, that whatever changes or revolutions India may go through, it is bound to remain as far as we can look ahead, a country of villages, a country of cultivators, dependent as now for their livelihood on the land and what they can get out of it. Hence the establishment of large-scale industries alone is not a solution of the economic problems of India, where the situation is complicated by seasonal unemployment on a scale which is unknown in other parts of the world.

It is estimated that of those who depend on the land, the agricultural workers, comprising

¹ Radhakamal Mukerji, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, pp. 369-70.

² Minoo Masani, *Our India*, p. 157.

30,000,000 persons, are idle for three months of the year. Of the 42,000,000 cultivating owners and tenant cultivators, 60 per cent, i. e., 25,000,000 work on undersized holdings and are also unoccupied seasonally. Thus 55,000,000 out of 154,000,000 workers live in idleness for two to five months in different parts of India. Thirty per cent of India's profitably employed persons are seasonally unemployed, not counting the idleness or semi-idleness of the workers engaged in transport, trade and industry which agricultural unemployment brings in its train.¹

Seasonal unemployment of the type which is found in India can be resolved only by subsidiary occupations which do not require much investment of capital or great skill, and can be taken on and left off at will. "As an immediate expedient for the relief of impoverished villagers who can find nothing better to do through months of inevitable unemployment, the revival of the spinning wheel can be justified."² It is further independent of monsoon conditions and so can be carried on during famine time.

¹ Radha Kamal Mukerji, *Races, Lands, and Food*, p. 57.

² H. N. Brailsford, *Subject India*, p. 159.

This does not mean, however, that India does not need to be industrialized. On the contrary, there is an immediate need of rapid industrialization in order to reduce the terrible pressure on the land.

“But it also means that since not even 6 per cent of the people can be absorbed in large-scale industries in cities even after ten years, our small industries must be scattered all over the country-side and have their homes in villages and small towns. In this way, those whom the land cannot support can turn their hands to other jobs without being removed from their natural surroundings. Peasants who have nothing to do in the slack seasons will have some handicraft to fill up their spare time, and those who are not needed on the land at all can spend all their time at cottage industries of various kinds.”¹

The real problem in India is to provide occupation for this period of idleness during which no work can be done upon the land. The Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture reckoned the interval of absolute idleness as two

¹ Minoo Masani, *Our India*, p. 158.

to four months.¹ There is, of course, much under-employment at other times. It would be safe to say that this labour force is unemployed through one-third of every year.² Mr. Brailsford writing on the economic condition of India says:

“All told, we reckoned that it costs the labour of one man for forty days to raise one acre of wheat. I should have distrusted this incredible calculation, had I not afterwards found the same total in an official publication. I began with this figure to probe the secret of India’s poverty. She must waste her man-power by spending forty days to attain a result which a modern farmer would achieve in as many hours. That’s the first reflection, but the thought which follows is still more disconcerting. These peasants would gain nothing save leisure, if they could be presented with modern machines; their holdings range from five to ten acres, and they have nothing else to occupy their time if they should have to economise it. Trudging through these fields, the baffling

¹ *The Linlithgow Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture*, p. 566.

² H. N. Brailsford, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

problem of India's wasted labour power stared me in the face, and I met it again in the huddled huts of the village."¹

Gandhiji had found a solution of this baffling problem in hand spinning and other cottage industries. This saves the villagers from helpless and compulsory idleness through one-third of the year. "With capital, village industries might be created, but it is scarce. A spinning wheel may be made at home, or bought for a couple of shillings, and the marketing of the yarn calls for no organization. It need only be taken to the weaver who in most villages still continues, half-starved and loaded with debt, to compete with the mills. True, by a day's spinning only, one or two pence can be earned, but when a field labourer's day commands, from dawn to dusk, a wage that ranges from five pence to two pence halfpenny, and no field work is to be had, is a penny to be despised?"² In India the principal factor is labour, which is running to waste. Industries must be organised in such a way that they will call for little capital for producing goods

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

² H. N. Brailsford, *Subject India*, p. 227.

with easily available raw materials for markets at hand.

Large-Scale Industries No Solution

The extent to which large-scale industries can solve even the problem of wholetime employment can be gauged by the extent of their present achievement in this direction.

“Large-scale industries have been in existence in India now for more than half a century and have effected a considerable reduction in the volume of imports of manufacture: and yet the total number employed is only in the neighbourhood of 1.5 millions. The larger part of the manufactured goods we are still importing come under the category of what can be called capital or production goods; and it is well known that the production of capital goods involves use of less labour than that involved in the production of consumption goods. Bearing this in mind, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the additional number of workers that can be employed as a result of the extension of large-scale industries will not exceed another million or two millions; this would still

leave a larger number of the unemployed among the people of India.”¹

It is for this reason that Gandhiji says:

“Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work as is the case in India. The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting our villages. The problem is how to utilise their idle hours which are equal to the working days of the six months of the year.”²

Whether one looks at this question from the point of view of providing employment to the maximum number of people or of finding occupation for the underemployed people, small-scale and cottage industries are strongly to be recommended in rural India. The industrialists in their “Memorandum: *A plan of Economic Development for India*” (commonly known as “The Bombay Plan”) recognise the importance of small-scale and cottage industries.

¹ P. C. Jain, *Industrial Problems of India*, p. 70.

² *Harijan*, November 16, 1934.

"It is an essential part of our plan for the organisation of industries that adequate scope should be provided for small-scale and cottage industries along with large-scale industries. This is important not merely as a means of affording employment but also of reducing the need for capital, particularly of external capital, in the early stages of the plan.... But generally it may be stated that while in basic industries there is little scope for small industrial units, they have an important and useful place in consumption goods industries where their function is in many cases complementary to that of large units."¹

Even Pandit Nehru, who is all for factories and big machinery and who is convinced that "rapid industrialisation of India is essential to relieve the pressure on land, to combat poverty and raise standards of living, for defence, and a variety of other purposes," is equally convinced that small industry could be made to complement big industry. "It must be remembered," he writes, "that however rapid might be the develop-

¹ *A Plan of Economic Development for India*, 47, pp. 33-34.

ment of heavy industry in India, a vast field will remain open to small and cottage industries.”¹ Shah and Kambatta, who consider the adoption of the *charkha* (spinning wheel) as an antiquated and unprofitable method of taking off the surplus population from agriculture, “also agree that as a subsidiary industry, as a by-employment, there is and can be nothing to be said against the spinning-wheel.”²

The Wardha Scheme, in its early emphasis on self-support through the sale of school products, has been criticised on the ground that it will create unjust and unequal competition between the school children and the artisan.³ This

¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 411-12.

² Shah and Kambatta, *The Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India*, p. 322.

³ Professor K. T. Shah writes in *The Times of India*, Nov. 4, 1937:

“Even if the scheme were unobjectionable in a sense, its reaction upon actual life promises to be far from agreeable. Assuming that the scheme is successfully put into practice, the reaction upon the rest of the community not at school would be such a severe competition with the products of professional adult artisans, that its success, even if it is an accomplished fact, would have been too dearly bought. For the pupils in such schools numbering perhaps three crores all over India, would be working regularly on specific articles of a commercial

does not prove any inherent defect in the scheme. It is really a question of the distribution of goods and will require careful planning on behalf of the state. As Mahatma Gandhi has pointed out, "There is hardly any competition in the products of village handicrafts. And care will be taken to manufacture things which do not come into unfair competition with any indigenous manufactures. Thus *khadi*, village paper, palm gur, and the like have no competitors."¹ The State which purchases the articles of school children for distribution will also protect the artisan. The real com-

value. They would be provided free workshop, free skilled instruction, free supervision, free marketing of their products—generally in a sheltered market—and of course, free finance. Even if the strictest accounts are kept of all such elements of the cost of production, the resultant wares must depress the market against the ordinary professional worker. The latter has no alternative outlet in large-scale mechanised industry, which is unwelcome in the eye of many a supporter of such ideas. The fact that the competing artisans would in most cases be the parents of the children thus being trained through some productive occupation will afford no mitigation of the fundamental wrong to the adult artisan by adding to the competition of machine-made goods this further item of child-labour products. Even agriculture will not suffice in all its branches to ensure against this competition from child labour in productive handicrafts. How, then, can we welcome such a scheme to be put in force at once on a nationwide scale?"

¹ *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 15 also *Harijan*, 16, 10, 37.

petition will not be between artisans and school children, but between the former and the mills. The state will have to plan the economy in such a way that the handicrafts and big industry may both survive.

“Whether for the sake of the produce of the basic schools or whether to enable the students of basic schools to earn their livelihood, it is necessary that our economic structure should be one that recognises the place of rural and home industries. After all, the claim put forward by village industries is a very modest one. It only pleads that the few industries necessary for the fulfilment of the elemental necessities of human life in the villages, e.g., those of food and clothing, may be reserved as the field of rural handicrafts, i.e. may be protected from exploitation by big machinery.”¹

Looking at the problem from the point of view of the social conditions prevailing at the present moment in India, the cottage

Cottage Industries
Suit Indian Society

¹ *One Step Forward*: The Report of the First Conference of Basic National Education, 1940. p. 143.

and the small-scale industries which have been given a prominent place in the Wardha Scheme have additional advantages. They fit in with the social organisation of Indian society and will not involve a complete break with the past. This is a gain of no mean importance as the stability of the economic organisation really depends on how far it embodies the social and ethical ideals of a particular group.

The first important factor in the social organisation of India is the family which is also the economic unit of Indian society. "The family consists of the man and woman, their sons, grandsons, and great grandsons who live in peace and harmony and share the common chest or purse. Founded on the virtues of affection and self-control, this system tends to develop a spirit of self-sacrifice and mutual control and dependence which are quite opposed to the competitive, individualistic spirit, the key-note of modern industrialism."¹ The economic and social unit is not the individual husband, wife and children but the whole family social relationship. In the past, the family has performed a very impor-

¹ Radhakamal Mukerji, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, p. 23.

tant function. Under the special economic conditions of India the large group has been beneficial. "In times of famine it has more resources to draw upon, and in all sorts of difficulties it provides succour for the individuals. It protects against relapse into poverty and also into lower levels of morality."¹ The Indian society draws its very inspiration from the joint family system. The ideals of Hindu manhood and womanhood that have been handed down from the remote past through the Epics and *Puranas*, in folk songs and rustic tales, are all drawn from the home and joint family life.²

The caste system is another peculiar characteristic of the ancient economic order. The caste not only determines the circle within which marriage can take place, but defines to some extent the proper and characteristic occupation of its members. The ancient economic order represented a legal recognition of the natural division of society into functional groups. It aimed at directing the various units of economic society

¹ H. Daniel Buchannan, *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*, p. 22.

² Radhakamal Mukerji, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, p.

in consonance with one another and at safeguarding the community from over-production through personal greed and uncontrolled production. It curbed devastating competition and emphasized cooperation and obedience as the basis of all law and order. "The amount of money in circulation in the village, was, indeed, almost negligible, barter and personal service taking the place of money payments."¹

The distribution by castes into various occupations shows how well proportioned the different economic channels were. At present the old-time primary occupations are represented by the following castes:²

TABLE VIII
Distribution of Occupations by Castes

<i>Castes</i>						<i>Per Cent of Population</i>
Brahmans	..	..	..	..	..	5
Kshattriyas	..	..	..	..	..	10
Traders	..	..	..	..	..	1.5
Agriculturists	..	..	..	..	..	50
Shepherds	..	..	..	..	..	3
Carpenters and Blacksmiths				..	..	3

¹ A. K. Coomarswamy, *The Indian Craftsman*, pp. 4-5.

² J. C. Kumarappa, Handicrafts and Cottage Industries, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 233, May, 1944, p. 107.

Castes						Per Cent of Population
Artisans ..	..	..	..	..	..	15
Oil Pressers ..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Potters ..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Tanners and Shoemakers ..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Washermen ..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Barbers ..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Scavengers ..	..	..	..	..	..	1.5
Others ..	..	..	..	..	..	1
						100 %

These castes do not any longer ply their ancestral trade, but the figures are indicative of the original proportions planned out. At present, over 84 per cent of the people live on the land, as the old handicrafts and cottage industries have lost their place, having been ousted by cheap imports from abroad.

Criticism has often been levelled against the rigidity of the caste system in India. It is true that the old institution has very much degenerated in modern times, but it has been less rigid than is generally supposed. "Change is constantly taking place within the castes, especially when new influences come to bear."¹ In spite of the origin,

¹ H. Daniel Buchanan, *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*, p. 24.

the unit is proselytising, constantly growing by accretion. "It is always drawing new people within its fold, and giving them some characteristic customs and institutions; it ensures for them a well-defined place and rank in society."¹

"It was a division of society into functional groups. Caste is a 'system of noblesse oblige; each man is born to his ordained work, through which alone he can spiritually progress.... For the priest, learning; for the king, excellence in kingcraft; for the craftsman, skill and faithfulness; for the servant, service.'"²

The caste system performed a very important function of handing on from generation to generation the patterns of skill, knowledge and behaviour which are ordinarily spoken of as culture—all the benefits and advancement achieved in man's struggle to control environment. Craft secrets were well safeguarded and perpetuated by occupational castes, and the caste generally functioned as a guild or trade union.³

¹ Radhakamal Mukerji, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, pp. 33-34.

² A. K. Coomarswamy, *The Indian Craftsman*, p. 67.

³ J. H. Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 99.

Another important function of the caste system was to provide a place in society for different racial, social, occupational, or religious groups as cooperating parts of the social whole, without losing their own distinctive character and their separate individual life. °

“One important function of caste, perhaps the most important of all its functions, and the one which above all others makes caste in India a unique institution, is, or has been, to integrate Indian society, to weld into one community the various competing, if not incompatible, groups composing it. Some of these groups have been occupational or, religious. Others, and this is more important, have been national, political, and tribal societies that must otherwise have either been absorbed and transformed or remained as unadjustive and possibly subversive elements.”¹

Instead of having internecine conflict, the caste system developed a scheme of social adjustment which helped in integrating the different sections of the people.

¹ J. H. Hutton, *Caste in India*, p. 106.

For the welfare of the community it is essential that the social equilibrium which has been upset should be restored, and cottage industries must be revived. "If we all take to agriculture, the community will suffer from a maldistribution of its talents—a social deficiency disease. This is the main trouble in India. For instance, the goldsmiths have lost their calling, and their deft fingers have to break stones for road making. The accumulated skill of centuries of the Hindu artisans is now running to waste, which is a loss to the progress of the human race itself."

It is, however, impossible and inadvisable to revive the caste system in its old form. It will have to be revivified to meet the needs of the present. "With the changing requirements of modern life, the old-time goldsmiths would have been well utilised in making such skills as are in great demand to day, say watches and time-pieces, and so forth."¹

Apart from the caste system, there are some peculiar social conditions such as the *purdah* system and social restrictions against widow-remarriage

¹ J. C. Kumarappa, Handicraft and Village Industries, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 233, May 1944, p. 107.

which have to be taken into account in social planning. It will take some time before the social evils can be completely eradicated. "India, being the land of caste and *purdah* systems, needs domestic industries even more than Europe. The successful introduction of small industries to be carried on at home, will be the salvation of millions, especially of the helpless widows."¹

Another important reason why small-scale industries should be encouraged is that they are more suited to the habits and temperament of Indian peasants than large-scale industries.

"The close and heated atmosphere of factory life, its congestion and insanitation, its hard work and discipline are generally repugnant to the Indian villager, who is an agriculturist by tradition and temperament, and a factory worker only by necessity. The environments of the mill and the factory are not such as to attract him from the independent ways of a not unpleasant rural life, while the cleavages in family life caused by the abandonment of the home

¹ Jadunath Sarkar, *Economics of British India*, p. 82.

for the factory will have an effect on other things than mere production.”¹

Another important social element which has to be taken into account in the reconstruction of Indian economic life is the religious attitude of the people towards life. Religion has a strong hold on the masses of the people even to the present day. The arts and crafts of the Indians are essentially idealistic and religious and are applied to the ends of religion and mythology. Religion has not only been the motive force and inspiration to the Hindu artist and craftsman but the ceremonial worship has had also its influence on art;² Hindu craftsmen in certain parts of India worship the implements of their labour at the *Dashera* festival. This Hindu custom has survived among some Mohammedan converts, e.g., among the Thavais of northern India, who worship their tools at the Id-ul-fitr, making offerings of sweetmeats to them. In Gwalior, in a modern workshop, the workmen prepare models of

¹ P. Padmanabha Pillai, *Economic Conditions in India*, pp. 158-59.

² Radhakamal Mukerji, *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, pp. 47-55.

trains, machinery, etc., on which they have been engaged and pay honour to them at the *Dashera* festival. The Indian craftsmen, or at least the most important guild or caste of craftsmen, claim to have descended from the five sons of *Visvakarma*—the God of the arts and crafts, of whom one was a blacksmith, the second a carpenter, the third a founder, the fourth a mason, and the fifth a goldsmith; and the followers of these crafts in southern India still form one compact community.¹

The caste system and the religious attitude towards life may appear peculiar in this modern age, but they came into existence because they were suited to the needs of the time, place, and people.

Readjustment of the Social Institutions in the period of Transition

“With the arrival of new conditions and ways of working, all these special features are being changed—modern materialistic interpretations have put many Brahman priests and their gods out of employment—the same forces are levelling the barriers between castes. These products of an old civili-

¹ A. K. Coomarswamy, *The Indian Craftsman*, pp. 61-62.

sation are dying because a part of the soil which held their roots has been removed.”¹

India cannot ignore the spirit of the age and all the advance made by technology. “We have to function in line with the highest ideals of the age we live in, though we may add to them or seek to mould them in accordance with our national genius.”² All the ancient institutions of India, including caste and religion will have to be adjusted and modified in accordance with the spirit of the age. Gandhiji himself, who recognises the importance of the caste system as it prevailed in the past, has made it repeatedly clear that caste as a whole as it exists today needs to be eliminated. “I have frequently said that I do not believe in caste in the modern sense. It is an excrescence and a handicap on progress. We are all absolutely equal. Assumption of superiority by any person over any other is a sin against God and man. Thus, caste in so far as it connotes distinctions in status is an evil.”³

¹ H. Daniel Buchanan, *The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*, p. 26.

² Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 571.

³ R. K. Prabhu, and U. R. Rao (compiled by), *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 108.

But if India is to develop on healthy lines, it must take into full account its cultural heritage —the family, religion, the caste and other social institutions.

“There can be no real cultural or spiritual growth based on imitation. Such imitation can only be confined to a small number who cut themselves off from the masses and the springs of national life. True culture derives its inspiration from every corner of the world but it is home-grown and has to be based on the wide mass of the people We have to think in terms of the people generally, and their culture must be a combination and development of past trends, and must also represent their new urges and creative tendencies.”¹

It will be a mistake to break with the past completely and ignore the social institutions and traditions which have functioned for centuries. The path of India’s progress lies in adapting and revivifying the old social institutions.

¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 577.

A common criticism against the Wardha Scheme is that it will retard the progress of industrialisation and scientific invention. *The Modern Review of Calcutta* (January 1939) writes :

"The machines are aids to human labour. When properly used, machinery protects workers against hardship and makes things easy for them. The appliances used in handicrafts are intrinsically as much of machinery as the robots of modern industry. A slave to the *Charka* is no better off compared to a slave working a ring frame machine. It is the slavery that is objectionable and not the machine. The *Charka* or the *Takali* are as much machines as any other mechanical appliances. They are not natural objects like fruits, trees or flowers.

"It is necessary that a scheme of national education should be based on clear reasoning. When the world is changing its productive machinery with a view to enrich the lives of all men and women, it is no use making fetishes of inferior appliances. It is no doubt true that better machinery is not

available to the masses, but the ideal nevertheless should be to equip India with the best of everything and this can only be done if the people of India could be taught the intricacies of modern mechanical sciences. India would be science-minded and Indian thought would be purged of all forced reasoning which is not based upon truth.



"There cannot be any philosophical argument against making iron out of ore, any more than there could be against making flour out of wheat or a bedstead out of a tree. The economic activities of mankind are mainly reduced down to giving useful form or location to the gifts of nature. Taking the wool from the sheep and converting it into a coat or a blanket is very similar to making medicinal sera out of a horse. Artificial silk from wood and real silk from cocoons stand on an equal footing in industrial rating.

"When we study the mechanism of modern life we find that large-scale production and specialised labour have become vital components of the productive system of the

present-day world. Some of the most important necessities of modern life are only obtainable with the help of modern scientific apparatus and appliances. Where millions died before without medical aid or any hope of cure, modern medicine has thrown a challenge to death. And modern medicine cannot be practised with the assistance of handicrafts. Modern transport, which has given a new meaning to humanity, cannot depend solely on handicrafts. Even mass education would require, at every step, the intimate assistance of modern industry."

Dr. C. R. Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University, said in his Presidential Address, delivered at the 13th All India Educational Conference, Calcutta, on the 27th December, 1937:

"All the world over there are two voices ringing, the capitalistic voice and the communistic. Both agree in thinking that hand labour should be minimised and machine labour maximised; that nature should be exploited and large-scale industries should be established. Here in India alone we have a

new voice, a third voice, which seems to condemn the whole of western civilization as a failure and calamity, and wants us to get back to the woods and forests from which it was a grievous mistake that we emerged at all.”¹

There is nothing in the Wardha Scheme which would check the progress of science and industrialisation. On the other hand, the coordinated training in the use of the hand and the eye, in practical skill and observation and manual work would make a better preparation for scientific and industrial training than mere book learning.² Mahatma Gandhi has throughout emphasized that crafts should not be taught mechanically but scientifically.³

Secondly, the critics have failed to notice that the main aim at this early stage of education is to create interest, awaken curiosity and to strengthen the power of observation in the child and give him an opportunity for the development of his

¹ *The Indian Journal of Education*, Vol. III., April 1938, No. 4, pp. 1-13.

² *Basic National Education*, Report of the Zakir Hussain Committee, p. 60.

³ *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 4, also *Harijan*, 37. 7. 1937.

personality. And there is no doubt that this can be best developed through some kind of manual and creative work. It is only in the post-basic stage that specialisation and preparation for vocation would come in. From the suggestions made by the Committee of the Hindustani Talimi Sangha for preparing a scheme for post-basic education, it seems clear that training for industry has not been neglected, though they have kept it in mind that these vocations are meant for a rural population.

The following¹ are some of the vocations suggested for the post-basic period: (1) Agriculture and dairy farming, (2) Medicine, (3) Engineering, (4) Mechanics, (5) Commerce, (6) Electricity, (7) Teaching, (8) Journalism, (9) Printing (10) Fine Arts, (11) Domestic Science, (12) Mining and other industries.

Children will be prepared for these vocations according to their aptitude. Along with the training for vocations, other subjects for general education, including science, will also be included. The course of training will occupy three to five years and will be complete in itself so that the

¹ *Samagra Nai Talimi*, Report of the Sevagram National Educational Conference, 1946.

youth will be ready to enter life. This does not sound like a "primitive" plan.

Mahatma Gāndhi is fully alive to the great material progress made by technology. He has been greatly misunderstood about his attitude towards machinery. To say that he is opposed to all machinery is simply not true. What Gandhiji regards as anti-social is the type of machine which, by displacing human labour increases unemployment. Asked on one occasion whether he was against all machinery, Gandhiji replied:

"How can I when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning wheel is a machine. A little toothpick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machines, not machinery as such, the craze for what they call labour saving machinery. Men go on saving labour still thousands go without work and are thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not

philanthropy but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not atrophy the limbs of man.”¹

Further, cottage industries are only intended to supplement and not to replace big industries. Gandhiji writes, “The minor industries I conceive will not replace the major ones, but will supplement them. I aspire even to induce the owners of large industries to take interest in this work which is purely humanitarian. I am a well-wisher of the mill owners, too, and they will bear me out when I say that I have not failed to help them when I could.”²

Gandhiji is not against scientific inventions and improvements in machinery as such. He says :

“I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I would not care for the asphyxiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility

¹ *Young India*, November 13, 1924.

² M. K. Gandhi, *Cent Per Cent Swadeshi*, p. 6.

which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people.”¹

Gandhiji is only protesting against the debasement of humanity. It is the danger of large-scale industrialisation which has led him to conceive of the autonomous and self-contained village as the unit of society. In this way he is trying to seek a new kind of synthesis avoiding the defects inherent in rural economy and the pitfalls revealed in modern industrial civilisation. “In his insistence on decentralisation of industry and the creation of small and autonomous units, Gandhiji is the harbinger of the future civilisation.”²

¹ M. K. Gandhi, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

² Humayun Kabir, The Indian Revolution, in *Gandhiji*, p. 102.

CHAPTER V

THE WARDHA SCHEME AND THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEM

The linguistic problem of India may briefly be stated as twofold: (1) to restore the mother tongue¹ to its proper position; and (2) to adopt one language—Hindustani—for inter-provincial life.

Language enshrines thought. It also touches the life of the people at every corner. It is therefore through the mother tongue that originality in thought and power of expression can be developed. It is also through the mother tongue that knowledge can be diffused rapidly among the masses. True education can therefore be imparted only through the mother tongue.

For the purpose of intercommunication between different provinces, and also to preserve national unity, India must develop a *lingua franca*. It will have a great harmonising and unifying in-

¹ 'Mother tongue' here refers to the spoken languages of the different provinces of India.

fluence over the different provinces and communities of India. A common language is a great help to cultural adjustment.

With these objects in view the Wardha Scheme made the following recommendations with regard to the teaching of the mother tongue and of Hindustani:

(1) "The proper teaching of the mother tongue is the foundation of all education. Without the capacity to speak effectively and read and write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people's ideas, emotions and aspirations, and can therefore be made a valuable means of social education, while also instilling right ethical and moral values. Also it is a natural outlet for the expression of the child's aesthetic sense and appreciation, and if proper approach is adopted, the study of literature becomes a source of joy and creative expression."¹

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 17.

(2) "The object of including Hindustani as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum is to ensure that all the children educated in these national schools may have a reasonable acquaintance with a common '*Lingua Franca*.' As adult citizens they should be able to coöperate with their fellow-countrymen belonging to any part of the country. In teaching the language the teacher should in various ways quicken in the students the realisation that this language is the most important product of cultural contact of the Hindus and Muslims in India. It is the repository in its more advanced forms of their best thoughts and aspirations. They should learn to take pride in its richness and vitality and should feel the desire to serve it devotedly."¹

It is necessary to examine these recommendations critically as they involve the question of (1) using the mother tongue instead of English which has been the medium of instruction in the middle and high schools in the past;

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

and (2) using Hindustani as the common language for the whole country.

To understand the position of the mother tongue in the present system of education, it is necessary to make a historical survey of the problem.

It is only against a proper background that a correct estimate can be made of the recommendations of the Zakir Hussain Committee.

It has already been referred to in Chapter I how the Minute of Lord Macaulay set at rest the Anglo-Oriental controversy ^{English versus Mother Tongue} by putting its weight definitely on the side of the education of the Indians through the medium of English. He was supported by Lord William Bentinck who declared that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education.¹ This was a momentous decision for Indian education. The encouragement given to oriental learning was

¹ *Selections from Educational Records*, Part I, p. 130.

stopped on the ground that “the money spent on Arabic and Sanskrit in colleges was not merely a dead loss to the cause of truth; it was bounty money paid to raise up champions of error and call into being an oriental interest which was bound by the condition of its existence to stand in the front of the battle against the progress of European literature.”¹ One of the main objects of the introduction of English as the medium of instruction and the English language as the chief subject of study was “to undermine gradually, and if possible to subvert eventually, the religions and civilisation of India.”²

The injustice of the step taken was soon recognized at least in theory, and the General Committee of Public Instruction of which Macaulay himself was the president clearly states in its first annual report submitted to the government of India after the promulgation of the resolution as follows:

“We are deeply sensible of the importance of encouraging the cultivation of the Ver-

¹ Charles Trevelyan, *On the Education of the People of India*, p. 91.

² K. M. Pannikar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction*, p. 57.

nacular languages. We do not conceive that the order of the 7th March precludes us from doing this, and we have constantly acted on this construction.... We conceive the formation of a Vernacular literature to be the ultimate object to which all our efforts must be directed. At present, the extensive cultivation of some foreign language which is always very improving to the mind is rendered indispensable by the almost total absence of a vernacular literature and the consequent impossibility of obtaining a tolerable education from that source only."¹

This ultimate object was steadily kept in view by the British. Their policy was to develop the use of English, but in no wise at the expense of the vernacular. On the contrary, the development, refinement and enrichment of the vernacular was one of their principal aims.²

In the famous Despatch of 1854 which has been described as "the Magna Despatch of 1854 Charta of English Education" in India, Sir Charles Wood, as President of the

¹ Charles Trevelyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

² *Report of the Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 232.

Board of Control gave classic expression to the policy of concurrent development of vernacular literature and English education. He said :

“It is neither our aim nor our desire to substitute the English language for the Vernacular dialects of the country. We have always been most sensible of the importance of the use of languages which alone are understood by the great mass of the population..... It is indispensable, therefore, that in any general system of education the study of them should be assiduously attended to and any acquaintance with improved European knowledge which is to be communicated to the great mass of people—whose circumstances prevent them from acquiring a high order of education and who cannot be expected to overcome the difficulties of a foreign language —can only be conveyed to them through one or another of the Indian languages.”

He went on to add that the teaching of the English language should “be combined with a careful attention to the study of the vernacular language of the district, and with such general instruction as can be conveyed through that language.”

"We look, therefore, to the English language and to the Vernacular languages of India together as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge, and it is our desire to see them cultivated together."¹

The aim of the Directors was clear. It was never their intention to substitute English for the Vernacular dialects. They wished to cultivate a bilingual system for those pupils for whom English was regarded as necessary, and gradually to develop the vernacular schools up to the level of those in which the medium was English.²

This sound and excellent policy of the Despatch was, however, never given a chance. The Indian languages were not given any encouragement for a long time to come, with the result that the languages spoken and understood by the masses continued to languish.³

¹ Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East Indian Company to the Governor General of India in Council (No. 49, dated 19th July, 1854, Paras. 13-14) in *Selections from Educational Records*, Part II, pp. 367-68.

² *Report of the Calcutta University Commission*, 1917-19, Vol. II, Part I, p. 233.

³ Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, *History of Education in India*, p. 174.

With the creation of the universities in 1857

Effect of Subordinating Secondary Education to Universities

the interests of secondary education were subordinated to those of the universities.

This had an adverse effect on secondary education. Since the education given by the new universities was entirely through English and consisted mainly in the study of English subjects, the High Schools which came to be dependent on them found it necessary to give less and less importance to the vernaculars.¹

The University of Calcutta at first acted consistently with the spirit of the Despatch. It provided in the first regulations for the Entrance Examination that in Geography, History and Mathematics the answers might be given in any living language. But later it withdrew the permission to answer in the vernacular and in 1861-62 ruled that "all answers in each branch shall be given in English except when otherwise specified." The university thus stimulated education through the English medium at the expense of the vernaculars.²

¹ K. M. Pannikar, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

² Report of the Calcutta University Commission, *op.cit.*, para I, pp. 234-35.

The Indian Education Commission which was appointed by a Resolution of the Government of India—dated 3rd February, 1882—recommended after considerable inquiry that in the middle classes at least the vernacular should be used as the medium of instruction.

“The point is much less clear in the case of the middle schools in which, speaking generally, a pupil enters for the first time upon the study of history, science, and mathematics, concurrently with English. If all these subjects are taught through English instead of through the pupil’s own vernacular—just as under earlier systems of instruction Latin and Greek were taught to English boys, not through English but through Latin—it is to be feared that his progress in them will be slow. Proficiency in English will, in fact, be gained at the expense of his general education.”

The Commission, however, refrained from making any definite recommendations in regard to High Schools but commended the consideration of the matter to local governments; and urged that

the decision must depend on local circumstances and that the freest scope should be left to the managements of the schools.¹

The Commission of 1902 recognised the disastrous results of this system and condemned the use of English at too early an age, and the poor teaching of both English and the vernacular in the schools. The Commission reported:

“Notwithstanding the prominent position given to English throughout the course, the results are most discouraging. Students after matriculation are found to be unable to understand lectures in English when they join a College. In some cases the difficulty is said to disappear after a short time; but it appears to be the case that many students pass through the entire university course without acquiring anything approaching a command of the language, and proceed to a degree without even learning to write a letter in English correctly and idiomatically. Even those who have acquired con-

¹ Report of The Indian Education Commission, paras. 249-250.

siderable facility in speaking and composition are, as we ourselves had many occasions of observing, lamentably deficient in pronunciation.... We therefore venture to express our opinion that it is desirable that the study of English should not be permitted to be begun till a boy can be expected to understand what is being taught in that language.”¹

The Commission also realised that, “unless, however, a good training in the vernacular is given in the schools, no effort of the university will avail. At present the subject is frequently neglected and the teaching is relegated to ill-paid and incompetent instructors.”²

On this recommendation the Government of India issued a resolution on Indian Educational Policy, 1904 their Educational Policy in March 1904, in which it was said “that in the pursuit of English education the cultivation of the vernaculars is neglected, with the result that the hope expressed in the Despatch of 1854 that they could become the vehicle of

¹ *Report of the Indian Universities Commission, 1902*, para. 83, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, para. 95-96, p. 28.

diffusing western knowledge among the masses is as far as ever from realisation."¹ As regards the teaching of languages in schools, they observed:

"English had no place, and should have no place, in the scheme of primary education. It has never been part of the policy of Government to substitute the English language for the vernacular dialects of the Country. It is true that the commercial value which a knowledge of the English language commands, and the fact that the examinations of the High Schools are conducted in English, cause the secondary schools to be subjected to a certain pressure to introduce prematurely both the teaching of English as a language and its use as a medium of instruction; while for the same reasons the study of the vernacular in those schools is liable to be thrust into the background. This tendency, however, requires to be corrected in the interests of sound education. As a general rule, a child should not be

¹ Government of India Resolution on, *Indian Educational Policy*, 1904, para. 8.

allowed to learn English as a language until he has made some progress in the primary stages of instruction and has received a thorough grounding in his mother tongue. It is equally important that when the teaching of English has begun, it should not be prematurely employed as the medium of instruction in other subjects. Much of the practice, too prevalent in Indian schools, of committing to memory ill-understood phrases and extracts from textbooks or notes may be traced to the scholars having received instruction through the medium of English before their knowledge of the language was sufficient to enable them to understand what they were taught. The lines of division between the use of the vernaculars and of English as a medium of instruction would, broadly speaking, be drawn at a minimum age of 13. No scholar in a secondary school should, even then, be allowed to abandon the study of his vernacular, which should be kept up until the end of the school course.”¹

¹ Government of India Resolution, *Indian Educational Policy*, *op. cit.*, para. 26.

The Government of India Resolution of 1913 again stated that "There is much experience to the effect that scholars who have been through a complete vernacular course are exceptionally efficient mentally."¹

This question has loomed large before the Indian public. A resolution was moved in the Imperial Legislative Council (17th March, 1915) recommending to the Governor General in Council to have steps taken for making the Indian vernaculars the media of instruction and English a second language compulsory for Indian pupils in all secondary schools.²

The Calcutta University Commission made elaborate and systematic enquiry into the whole problem and said:

"We are convinced that the use of the English medium is at present excessive in the secondary schools, to the detriment both

¹ Government of India Resolution on *Indian Educational Policy*, 1914, para. 14, p. 14.

² *Proceedings of Legislative Council from April 1914 to March 1915*, Vol. LIII, p. 418.

of the pupil's education and of the rational use of both media, and that a substantial change should be made; and we think it would probably be desirable as a rule to use the vernacular as the medium throughout the secondary schools for all subjects other than English and Mathematics."¹

The Punjab University Enquiry Committee which also went into this question in 1932-33 reached a similar conclusion. They reported that "Another powerful factor in diminishing the effectiveness of teaching is the use of English as the medium of instruction.... Witnesses are almost unanimous that the use of the vernacular medium should be prolonged and that of the English medium deferred."² They, therefore, recommended that the vernacular medium should be used throughout the course and that the medium of examination should also be the vernacular.³

¹ *Calcutta University Commission Report*, p. 33, para. 17.

² *Punjab University Enquiry Committee*, pp. 78-79, para. 10.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 302, para. 9.

Inter-University
Board

The Inter-University Board discussed the matter at the third conference of Indian Universities held at Delhi in 1934. Mr. Satyamurti moved that the universities should consider the desirability of making the Indian languages the media of instruction at as early a date as possible. The resolution was hotly debated but was lost.¹

What were the reasons that, in spite of the policy of the Government to encourage the vernacular and the recommendations of these learned commissions to use the vernacular as the medium of instruction, secondary education continued to be carried on through the medium of English? Firstly, the mistake lay in the Despatch of 1854. The authors of the Despatch believed that the higher education of a modern character could only be given in India through the medium of English. Secondly, it was also their view that the Government should choose its Indian officers mainly from among those highly educated young men who had obtained degrees

¹ *Third Conference of Indian Universities, 1934*, pp. 100-107.

and other university distinctions.¹ "Education came to be regarded by the Indian people less and less as an end in itself and more and more as merely an avenue either to lucrative careers or to the dignified security of appointments, however modest, under Government, and in either case, to a higher social status which ultimately acquired a definite money value in the matrimonial market."² Both these factors influenced secondary education, and English has continued to occupy a prominent place in the school curriculum to the present day.

The Government policy throughout the period was guided by two objectives, viz, to convey western education in its higher forms through the medium of English, and secondly to encourage the vernaculars.³ A duty to the vernaculars was throughout acknowledged but it remained only an *ultimate* objective. English was considered indispensable in the immediate formative

¹ Despatch from the court of Directors of the East India Company to the Governor-General of India in Council (No. 49 dated 19th July, 1854), paras. 73-74, in *Selections from Educational Records*, part II, p. 385.

² Valentine Chirol. *Indian Unrest*, p. 211.

³ *Report of the Calcutta University Commission 1917-19*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 241.

period, and it was falsely believed that it would aid and vitalise the process of development of the vernaculars. "Such a compromise was from its inception weighted against the vernaculars and the idea of their active development receded to the background with the lapse of time. Instead of helping vernacularisation, the compromise succeeded in imposing a foreign language with which our national genius carries on at best as a disabled man might with an artificial limb."¹ English assumed an importance out of all proportion to the real needs of the people, as most of the work was carried on in it. "It is not enough for us to learn the language, we must also know how to use it to the satisfaction of our rulers, for to the extent that we do so can we gain recognition from them as well as from our own people."²

The real mistake lay in replacing the use of the mother tongue by English which is so foreign in character.

"Not content with expelling the oriental classical languages, as instruments of in-

¹ B. K. Boman-Behram, *Educational Controversies in India*, pp. 607-08.

² Rabindranath Tagore, "Education in India" in *The New Era*, June 1936, p. 153.

struction, to make way for English, they exalted the medium as the classical language of the new Indian culture. This is where confusion begins. English as a temporary medium of instruction was reasonable. English as a living and virile language was bound to influence India. But English as a substitute for the indigenous classics was doomed to disastrous failure. And Macaulay's confusion of these two aspects of English was to be equally disastrous.... Confusion is worse confounded by failure to distinguish English as a medium from English as a subject of instruction."¹

O'Malley in his recent General Survey of Education in India makes a correct diagnosis of the trouble. He writes,

"There can be little doubt that the use of a foreign language as the basis of higher education has been a stumbling block. It is perfectly true that the use of another tongue has been part of education in India. Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian were all taught long before the British appeared on the

¹ Arthur Mayhew, *The Education of India*, pp. 87-88.

scene. It is also true that other races have learnt through the medium of a language other than their mother tongue and that in India the people themselves have shown a predilection for English. But the fact remains that the use of a foreign language as a medium is a real handicap. Years are spent in trying to master it, and in the end there is only too often an imperfect digestion of knowledge because the language of study is not the language of thought. Students are hampered by having to learn and express their ideas in a language other than that of daily life. There is much mechanical learning in which words are divorced from realities.”¹

The introduction of English as the medium of instruction in secondary and higher education has adversely affected the progress of India as a whole and also the lives of individuals. The neglect of the vernaculars has been largely responsible for illiteracy in India.

Harmful Results of English

¹ L. S. O’Malley (ed.), *Modern India and the West*, pp. 660-61.

In 1941, the percentage of literacy was only 12.2. Secondly students had to adopt bilingualism from the very beginning and this caused retardation in their actual progress.¹

English being a difficult language for foreigners, it could not become the *lingua franca* of the country. Even after more than a century, the knowledge of English is confined to one per cent of the population and is mainly a feature of urban life. Most of these people are found in large cities or along the main lines of communication.²

There can be no doubt on the question that the mother tongue of a people is the proper medium of instruction for them. In no part of the civilised world is a foreign tongue made the medium of national instruction. The case for restoring the vernaculars to their proper position is too strong and clear to be challenged by anybody, but it required the genius of Mahatma Gandhi to shake off the inertia of the people. As early as 1917 he pointed out that English did not satisfy the conditions of a national language. It will certainly

Argument for
Mother Tongue

¹ Robert Aura Smith, *Divided India*, pp. 72-73.

² O'Malley, *op. cit.*, p. 784.

be required for international purposes, but it had little justification for national affairs.¹ In 1937 he again drew the attention of the people to the view that English should have no place in the curriculum.

This view is also endorsed by the Central Advisory Board of Education in their Report on Post-War Educational Development in India. The report says:

“Careful consideration has been given to the question whether English should be introduced as a subject in the Basic School. The Board are of opinion that under no circumstances should it find a place in the curriculum of the Junior Basic (Primary) schools. Nor are they satisfied as to the desirability of introducing it at the Senior Basic (Middle) stage but they recognise that there may be a strong public demand for it in certain areas and they feel that the final decision in the case must be left in the hands of the Provincial Education Departments.”²

The matter was again discussed by the fourth conference of Indian Universities held in Bombay

¹ *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 395-99.

² *Post-War Educational Development in India*, p. 8.

in 1939 and this time the conference resolved that the medium of instruction at different stages of education up to and including the degree course should, as far as circumstances permit, be the mother tongue of the students. The conference was, however, of the opinion that English should be a compulsory subject of study in the High School courses.¹

The All India Muslim Education Conference also passed a resolution on the Wardha Scheme in which they recommended the adoption of Hindustani as the medium of instruction. The conference recommended that

“The entire basic education should be imparted through the medium of the mother tongue of students, namely, the medium of instruction for the Muslims of northern India should be Urdu. In the provinces where Hindustani language is not spoken, the provincial language should be the medium of instruction; but every student should be taught Hindustani as secondary language.”²

It is clear from this discussion that Mahatma Gandhi in recommending the elimination of Eng-

¹ *Fourth Conference of Indian Universities, 1939*, p. 49.

² *Report of the Kamal Yarjung Educational Committee*, pp. 182-83.

lish from the curriculum of the Basic Schools is not merely expressing the national sentiments of the Indian people but is also justified on psychological and educational grounds.

The second important problem with regard to the teaching of language Hindustani as the *Lingua Franca* which has to be considered is the claim of Hindustani to be regarded as the *lingua franca* of India because it has been included in the curriculum of the Wardha Plan as a compulsory subject.

Hindi and Urdu refer to the same speech—Hindustani. They are, however, written in two totally different scripts, and are therefore called by two different names, Hindi and Urdu—the former used mostly by the Hindus and latter mostly by the Moslems.

Hindi has a long history. The language originated in the *Apabhramsa* (or degenerate popular dialects) which began to constitute the common speech of the people about the second century B. C. It assumed a literary form in the eighth century A. D.¹

¹ Rao Raja Shyam Behari Mishra and Rai Bahadur Sukhdeo Mishra, "Hindi" in *Modern India and the West*, edited by L. S. S. O'Malley, p. 492.

There is a very close relationship between Western Hindi and Urdu. Western Hindi is descended from Soursenic Prakrit and has the following dialects; Bangaru, Brij Bhasha, Kanauji and the dialect spoken near Delhi and Meerut. The origin of Urdu is traced to the dialect spoken near Delhi and Meerut.¹

“Urdu by its origin is a dialect of the Western Hindi. It was spoken for centuries in the neighbourhood of Delhi and Meerut, and is directly descended from Soursenic Prakrit. This living dialect has formed the basis of Urdu, the name being given at a later period. It retains its original and essential character in the grammar, idioms, and a large number of Hindi words.”²

When the Muhammadan invaders conquered India and made Delhi their headquarters, it was natural that Persian, which was the official language of the conquerors, should have greatly influenced the prevailing dialect. Persian words were adopted not only because the conquerors

¹ Ram Babu Saksena, *History of Urdu Literature*, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 1.

brought many new things—relating to dress, food, religion and social life for which no counterparts could be found in the vernacular or in Sanskrit, but the use of Persian words was also considered a sign of learning and a way to please the masters.¹

“To this warp of Hindi words was added the woof of Persian, which language was brought with them by the Mughals and the Muslim rulers who preceded them. Into the fabric thus formed by Hindi and Persian a pattern of western literature was woven when India came in contact with western nations.”²

The further development of Hindustani was the result of social inter-course and cultural interaction between the Hindus and the Moslems.³

“The language thus developed by the combined efforts of Hindus and Muslims now boasts of a fairly varied and wide literature, which may be claimed as a common heri-

¹ Ram Babu Saksena, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

² Sir Abdul Qadir, “Urdu,” in *Modern India and the West*, edited by L. S. S. O’Malley, p. 523.

³ S. M. Jaffar, *Education in Muslim India*, p. 217.

tage by both and is gaining every day in importance and strength.”¹

Hindustani as a literary language was cultivated by both the Moslems and the Hindus.

“The former employed the Persian character for recording it, and enriched its vocabulary with a large stock of Persian and Arabic words. When this infusion of borrowed words is carried to an extreme, the language is intelligible only to educated Musalmans and to those Hindus who have been educated on Musalman lines. This persianised form of Hindustani is known as Urdu.”²

The grammar and syntax of Hindi and Urdu are identical but literary Hindi inclines towards Sanskrit, and literary Urdu towards Arabic and Persian. This makes them appear two different languages in their advanced stages in spite of their common origin and basic structure.³

¹ Khan Bahadur Sir Abdul Qadir, “The Cultural Influence of Islam in India,” in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 10th January, 1936.

² *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. I, p. 365.

³ Rao Raja Shyam Behari Mishra..., *op. cit.*, p. 493.

It is often said that India is not one nation but Languages of India a land of many peoples and languages. The Linguistic Survey of India recorded 723 different forms of speech—179 languages and 544 dialects.¹ These figures have to be taken with a good deal of reservation. The language problem was deliberately exaggerated to divide the people and thus serve imperialistic purposes.² “For of these 179 languages (the separate enumeration of dialects is irrelevant as they come under ‘language’), 116 are small tribal speeches belonging to the Tibeto-Chinese speech family which are found only on the northern and north-eastern fringe of India and are current among less than one per cent of the entire population of the country; and some two dozen more are similarly insignificant speeches belonging to other language groups, or are really languages not belonging to India.... For literature, for education, for public life we have only fifteen major or literary languages in India.”³ Hindustani acts as the most natural inter-

¹ Sir George Abraham Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. I, pp. 26-27.

² R. Palme Dutt, *The Problem of India*, pp. 93-95.

³ Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Languages and the Linguistic Problem*, p. 4.

provincial link among the speakers of the different Aryan languages and dialects of the north. "There is no doubt that there is a common element in the main languages of northern and central India which renders their speakers without any great conscious change in their speech mutually intelligible to one another, and this common basis already forms an approach to a *lingua franca* over a large part of India."¹ Hindustani, the principal dialect of western Hindi, is not only a local vernacular, but is also spoken over the whole of the North and West of continental India as a second language, a *lingua franca* employed alike in the court and in the market place by every one with any claim to education.²

"The anthropologist can distinguish several racial stocks in this peninsula, as in our own island (Great Britain), intermingled in varying proportions. The diversity of a language is a real impediment to unity, though it is much less serious than most of us suppose. Only twelve languages need be reckoned. There are many more in Europe. Those of northern

¹ *Census of India 1921*, Vol. I, Part I, p.199.

² *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. I, p. 365.

and central India, all of them derived from Sanskrit, are so closely akin that a quickwitted man who speaks one of them can with very little practice understand most, if not all, of the others with ease. The more individualistic Bengali is an exception. The Dravidian languages of the South are similarly akin.”¹

Hindustani thus affords the nearest thing to a *lingua franca* for India. “It is the natural *lingua franca* of 257 millions besides being understood by others; and in either of its two forms, High Hindi and Urdu, it is the literary language of over 140 millions. It is thus the third great language of the world, coming after northern Chinese and English.”²

The following Table will show the relative positions of the major languages of India and also the prominent place which Hindustani occupies among them:

¹ H. N. Brailsford, *Subject India*, p. 119.

² Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

TABLE IX
*The Major Languages of India*¹

Language		Number of Speakers	Number of Literates
Hindustani	(Urdu-		
Hindi	.. ..	139,000,000	10,355,000
Bengali	.. ..	62,600,000	10,000,000
Bihari	.. ..	28,000,000	2,500,000
Telegu	.. ..	27,600,000	3,107,000
Marathi	.. ..	22,800,000	3,770,000
Tamil	.. ..	22,000,000	3,067,000
Punjabi	.. ..	18,780,000	2,080,000
Rajasthani	.. ..	15,230,000	1,675,000
Kanarese	.. ..	13,400,000	1,852,000
Gujrati	.. ..	13,000,000	2,060,000
Malayalam	.. ..	10,400,000	3,500,000
Lahanda	.. ..	10,350,000	1,100,000
Oriya	.. ..	9,600,000	1,358,000
Kherwari	.. ..	4,200,000	300,000
Sindhi	.. ..	3,900,000	418,000
Pushtu	.. ..	3,800,000	125,000
W. Pahari	.. ..	3,656,000	325,000
Assamese	.. ..	2,300,000	258,000

There is no insurmountable difficulty in adopting

The Place of Hindustani as the common language for the whole of India. Even the people of South India who speak the Dravidian languages

¹ Robert Aura Smith, *Divided India*, p. 68.

should not find much difficulty in accepting it for interprovincial purposes, because "Hindi as a new Indo-Aryan speech has approximated itself very largely to the syntactical and other speech habits of the Dravidians; and the large Sanskrit and Prakrit element in the Dravidian languages forms another bond of union between the Aryan Hindi and the speeches of the Dravidian South."¹

Unfortunately, the political differences of the Hindus and the Moslems at the present moment are leading them to split this common language into High Hindi and High Urdu by introducing Sanskrit words on the one hand and Persian words on the other and making them appear different. But when the political controversy has died out, Hindustani will naturally become the *lingua franca* for the whole country.

"Hindustani implies the great *lingua franca* of India capable of being written in either character, and, without purism, avoiding the excessive use of either Persian or Sanskrit words when employed, for literature. It is easy to write this Hindustani for it has an opulent vocabulary of *tadbava* words

¹ Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *op. cit.*, 15.

understood every where by both Muslims and Hindus."¹

The Zakir Hussain Committee is therefore quite justified in including Hindustani as a compulsory subject and recognising its claim as the *lingua franca* of India.

The question of script is another complicated problem. The same language when written in Persian script becomes Urdu and when written in Devanagari it becomes Hindi. Neither the Hindus nor the Moslems would give up their script. The Zakir Hussain Committee has therefore recommended that

"In Hindustani areas this language will be the mother tongue, but the students as well as the teachers will be required to learn both the scripts, so that they may read books written in Urdu as well as in Hindi. In non-Hindustani speaking areas, where the provincial language will be the mother tongue, the study of Hindustani will be compulsory during the 5th and 6th years of school life, but the children will have the

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. II (14th Ed.), p. 571.

choice of learning either the one or the other script.”¹

Out of sheer despair Roman script has been recommended as the solution of the problem and as probably acceptable to both the communities.² But as Mahatma Gandhi has pointed out that “Sentiment and science alike are against the Roman script. Its sole merit is its convenience for printing and typing purposes. But that is nothing compared to the strain its learning would put upon millions. It can be of no help to the millions who have to read their own literature either in their own provincial script, or in Devanagari.”³

Mahatma Gandhi hopes that when mutual distrust and aloofness which exist at present disappear, the problem of the language will be solved without great difficulty. “Ultimately, when our hearts have become one and we are all proud of India as our country, rather than our provinces, and shall know and practise and relish different fruits of the same tree, we

¹ *Basic National Education*, p. 27.

² Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Languages and Linguistic Problems*, pp. 25-28.

³ Tendulkar and Others (ed.), *Gandhiji*, pp. 282-83.

shall reach a common language for provincial use."¹

There is, however, no reason to view with alarm the tendency to develop Hindi and Urdu separately. Once people think in terms of educating the masses and speak and write in terms of them, the courtly and affected style in both Hindi and Urdu will be eliminated and a simple, vigorous style of Hindustani will develop which will lead to uniformity between Hindi and Urdu. Mass education itself will bring about a measure of standardisation.²

The Wardha Scheme, which thinks in terms of the education of the masses, may itself help in developing a common language for the whole of India for interprovincial use. Hindustani can develop along with other provincial languages without doing any harm. The Wardha Scheme with its emphasis on both the spoken languages and Hindustani aims at bringing about national solidarity without sacrificing the freedom of the people of different provinces for self-expression through their own language.

¹ Tendulkar and Others (ed.), *Gandhiji*, p. 280.

² Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Question of Language*, pp. 12-18.

CHAPTER VI

THE WARDHA SCHEME AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

India is a land of several living religions.

The Problem of Religious Education

The 1941 census shows the religious composition of the Indian population as follows:

TABLE X

Communal Composition of the Total Population of India in 1941 per 1,000¹

Community	Number per 1,000 of the Population of India—(388,997,955)
Hindus (including scheduled castes)	655.4
Muslims	236.7
Christians (including Indian, Anglo-Indian and others)	16.2
Sikhs	15.6
Parsees	0.7
Buddhists	0.6
Jews	*2
Tribes	65.4
Others	1.1
 Total recorded by communities ..	 994.0
Total not recorded by communities	6.0

¹ East India Census 1941.

*2 Less than 1 per 10,000 of the total population.

In a country where there are so many different religions it is extremely difficult for the State to take the responsibility for religious instruction. There are two alternatives for meeting this difficulty. The State must either make arrangements for teaching the principles of different religious creeds or leave religious instruction to parents and religious bodies and confine the activities of the school to the development of those qualities in a child which would enrich his personality and enable him to make his unique contribution to society. The latter course includes the cultivation of all those finer feelings to which religion also makes an appeal, but it rules out instruction in a particular creed. The Wardha Scheme rejects the former alternative as impracticable and therefore adopts the latter course.

The problem is by no means new. It became acute when the British first came into touch with

Origin of the Problem
India. The early agents of the East India Company were indifferent to the education of the people. Their main interest was trade, and they did not want to do anything by way of religious interference

that would arouse suspicion and hostility among the people towards its rule.¹ In 1793 William Wilberforce influenced by Charles Grant, who held important positions in the services of the East India Company, moved the Parliament to afford facilities for Missions in India, but it came to no avail. The missionaries regarded this as a dark period in their history. "From that year, 1793, may be reckoned what has been well called the Dark Period of Twenty Years in the history of Christianity in India, during which all possible discouragement was given by the East India Company to every effort to spread the Gospel."²

In 1806, some of the Sepoy troops at Vellore, Religious Neutrality near Madras, mutineed, and the cause was attributed to the presence of missionaries. From that time the Company and its officers became more and more hostile towards the missionaries.³ After the Vellore mutiny, the Company declared its policy of religious neutrality in very clear terms :

¹ K. S. Vakil, *Education in Modern India*, pp. 43-44.

² Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, Vol. I, pp. 51-56.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

“When we afforded our countenance and sanction to the missionaries who have from time to time proceeded to India for the purpose of propagating the Christian religion, it was far from being in our contemplation to add the influence of our authority to any attempt they might make; for on the contrary, we were perfectly aware that the progress of real conversion would be gradual and slow, arising more from a conviction of the purity of the principles of our religion itself, and from the pious examples of its teachers, than from any undue influence or from the exertions of authority which are never to be resorted to in such cases.”¹

The missionaries, however, continued to carry on agitation, and it was in 1813 and after a heated debate that they got a resolution passed in the committee of the House of Commons to the effect that

“It is the duty of this country to promote the interests and happiness of the native

¹ Extract from Secret Despatch No. 3, from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, of Sept. 7, 1808; cited in *Education in India* by K. S. Vakil.

inhabitants of the British dominions in India, and that such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge and of religious and moral improvement. That in the furtherance of the above objects, sufficient facilities shall be afforded by law to persons desirous of going to, and remaining in, India for the purpose of accomplishing those benevolent designs."

The Resolution, however, provided that

"The principles of the British Government on which the natives of India have hitherto relied for the free exercise of their religion be inviolably maintained."¹

Before leaving India in 1835, Lord William Bentinck reaffirmed the policy of strict religious neutrality. In reply to a farewell address from the missionaries, the Governor-General declared that

"The fundamental principle of British rule, the compact to which the Government stands solemnly pledged, is strict neutrality. To

¹ Quoted in *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

this important maxim, policy as well as good faith have enjoined upon me the most scrupulous observance. The same maxim is peculiarly applicable to general education. In all schools and colleges supported by Government, this principle cannot be too strongly enforced. All interference and injudicious tampering with the religious belief of the students, all mingling of direct or indirect teaching of Christianity with the system of instruction ought to be positively forbidden.”¹

It should, however, be pointed out that the Government followed the policy of religious neutrality not as a matter of principle but as a matter of expediency. “What really influenced the Government, and still more the Directors at home, was their responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in India, and their dread of endangering imperial interests or the prosperity of the country by popular discontent or suspicion.”² The East India Company was established in 1600

¹ Arthur Howell, *Education in British India*, p. 34.

² Arthur Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 178; also M. R. Paranje, *A Source Book of Modern Indian Education*, pp. xiii-xvi.

and it lasted for 257 years. During the first half of this period it was a trading organisation and during the other half a political and administrative organisation. The Company had no other object than commerce or administration. If it showed any hostility to Christian Missions it was entirely due to 'blind selfishness.'¹ The Government was so nervous of arousing opposition from the people of India that up to 1854, it excluded the Bible even from the libraries of all Government institutions, and the masters, even if asked by the pupils, were to refuse to give any explanation of even its history.²

It was the belief of Bentinck, Macaulay and Trevelyan that Christianisation of India would follow as a result of purely secular western education. They had expected that this education would shake the faith of Hindus and Moslems in their respective religions and thus would naturally prepare them for the acceptance of Christianity.³

The Government, however, made its policy of religious neutrality quite definite and clear in the

¹ George Smith, *The Conversion of India*, p. 84.

² Eugene Stock, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 240. Also, Arthur Mayhew, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

³ Arthur Mayhew, *Ibid.*, pp. 165-66.

Despatch of 1854. Government institutions were meant for the benefit of the whole population and therefore education imparted in them should be exclusively secular. The Government did not want to prevent or discourage religious instruction of any kind, but it could be given only out of school hours and the inspectors were not expected to take notice of it in their periodical visits.¹

A new feature of the educational policy laid down in the Despatch of 1854 was the system of Grants-in-aid under which grants were given to private schools started and carried on by voluntary effort, under Government inspection. These aided schools might be conducted by Hindus, Moslems, or Christian missionaries. The system of education was based on an entire abstention from interference with the religious instruction conveyed in the school assisted. The managers were at liberty to give what religious instruction they chose. The Government inspection and grants were confined to secular instruction only.²

¹ Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company to the Governor-General of India in Council, (No. 49, dated the 19th July, 1854), in *Selections from Educational Records*, pp. 388-89.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 378-79.

The missionaries in England continued to protest against this principle of neutrality but the Government persisted in its policy of non-interference. Queen Victoria in her famous Proclamation made in 1858 at the time when the Government of India was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown, reaffirmed the principle of non-interference as follows:

“Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our Royal will and pleasure that none be in anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all alike shall enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects, on pain of our highest displeasure.”¹

¹ Eugene Stock, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-43.

People who wanted to spread the Christian religion were, however, not content with the policy of the Government. Agitation was carried on in England and it was pointed out that education given in Government schools and colleges was a complete failure. It led to "irreligion, discontent and disloyalty." It uprooted religious beliefs and unsettled moral and social principles.¹ A General Council on Indian Education was formed in London by leading members of the Missionary Society for the purpose of influencing the Government. The Council brought strong pressure on Lord Hartington, the Secretary of State for India in Mr. Gladstone's Government. As a result of this agitation and pressure a Viceregal Commission was formed in 1882 consisting chiefly of British officials, a few Indians, and three missionaries, under the chairmanship of Mr. William Hunter.² Various objections were raised in the Commission against the principle of excluding religious instruction from the school courses. The majority of the members, however, felt that

¹ Rev. James Johnson, *Our Educational Policy in India* pp. v, 10, 36-38.

² Eugene Stock, *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 141.

“religious feeling was so inflammable in India, and sectarianism so prevalent, that it was not safe to depart from a policy which had worked well in the past. The value of religious education was admitted on all sides, but it was hoped that home-instruction and the increase of aided schools in which religious instruction may be freely given, would to a large extent minimise the recognised evil of banishing it from Government primary schools.”

The Commission therefore rejected the proposal that religious instruction be permitted in primary schools maintained by municipal boards. Having rejected this proposal, the Commission by a large majority adopted the following recommendation: “That the existing rules as to religious teaching in Government schools be applied to all primary schools wholly maintained by municipal or local boards funds.”¹ The same principle of neutrality was to be followed in collegiate education.²

¹ *Report of the Indian Education Commission*—Appointed by the Resolution of the Government of India, dated 3rd February, 1882, p. 129.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 295-96.

Mr. K. T. Telang, in his minute on the Commission's Report, made it quite clear that "the institutions for secular instruction should not be embarrassed by any meddling with religious instruction, for such meddling, along with other mischiefs, will yield results which on the religious side will satisfy nobody, and on the secular side will be distinctly retrograde."¹

The Government of India in its declaration of 1904 again reaffirmed that "in the Government institutions, the instruction is, and must continue to be, exclusively secular."²

In reply to the criticism that the extension in India of education which was purely secular in character had tended to cause indiscipline and encourage a spirit of irreverence in the rising generation, the Government of India held that "the remedy for these evil tendencies was to be sought not so much in any formal methods of teaching conducted by means of moral textbooks or primers of personal ethics, as in the influence of carefully selected and trained teachers, the maintenance of a high standard of discipline,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 614.

² Government of India Resolution on *Indian Educational Policy*, 1904, para. 25.

the institution of well-managed hostels, the proper selection of textbooks, such as biographies which teach by example, and above all, in the association of teachers and pupils in the common interests of their daily life.”¹

Both the Indians and the English continued to protest against this policy of the Government. It was pointed out that much of the trouble in India was due to the fact that “an exotic (Education) Department has been foisted on the country, administered largely by officers absolutely ignorant of the country and devoid of sympathy with its people and their pupils.” And one of the several ‘perverse’ methods followed by this Department was that “knowledge has been pursued without any regard for training in the moral virtues or in the development of character.”² Religious conceptions in India provided the ties which held the whole fabric of Indian society together and it was believed that the loosening of these ties was not without serious injury and even danger to the State.³ The genius of Indian thought, the demands of Indian parents, the strong representations of

¹ *Ibid.*

² S. M. Mitra, *Indian Problems*, pp. 26-28.

³ Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, p. 261.

Indian chiefs were all in favour of religious education.¹

In 1913 again, the Government of India observed that "though the most thoughtful minds in India" lamented the tendency of the existing system of education to develop the intellectual at the expense of the moral and religious faculties, the Government of India could not change its policy of complete neutrality in any way.²

Since then, the Government has throughout adhered to the principle of strict neutrality in the matter of religious education.

"The existence in India of creeds differing widely from one another and from the faith of the ruling power has made it essential for the State to assume a position of strict religious neutrality in its relations with public instruction. This principle was emphatically asserted in the Despatch of 1854, and has ever since been rigidly enforced. No religious instruction is given in the Government schools; and provided only it imparts sound secular instruction, a private

¹ Sir Andrew Fraser, "Indian Unrest" in *The Nineteenth Century*, October 1910, p. 753.

² *Indian Educational Policy*, 1913, para. 5.

institution is equally entitled to Government aid whether it teaches the religion of the Bible, the Shastras, or the Koran."¹

Since the introduction of the new plan for educational reconstruction by Criticism of the Mahatma Gandhi, the problem of religious education Wardha Sheme has again been raised by different religious sects. A representative criticism of the neglect of religious education in the Gandhi Plan is important enough to be quoted in full. T. N. Siqueira in an article on "Light from Wardha" writes:²

"But in this laudable enthusiasm for laying the axe at the root of the unhappy divisions which have so long delayed India's national manhood, Mr. Gandhi seems to forget another danger which is even more serious to India's real well-being. He has himself repeatedly deplored the irreligiousness and indifferentism of many educated Indians today. And yet he makes no provision in his Scheme for religious

¹ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV, Ch. XIII, p. 447

² *The New Review*, December 1937, No. 36, Vol. VI, pp. 505-21.

education which is as much more important than physical or intellectual education as the immortal soul is more important than the mortal body. He even disappoints his admirers thus answering the very question we are here asking—Why did he not lay any stress on religious education? he was asked. Because he was teaching them practical religion, the religion of self-help.

“We cannot believe that the Mahatma considers self-help as enough religion for India’s children. Shall we, after all that tourists have said of the spiritual East and Sacred India, be content with the meagre religion of self-help? Self-help is a necessary but elementary virtue which will not take us very far on the road to God. Primary education, especially when it lasts seven years and is the only education most children are to have in life, cannot do without a serious and systematic course of religious training. We are fully aware of the difficulty of providing for such training in a country of so many religions; but no difficulty can extinguish a sacred and primary duty.

"How, then, Mr. Gandhi may ask, can Hindus and Mohammadans and Christians be provided with instruction in several religions? Will not this perpetuate communal divisions? The answer is that religion and communalism are not the same thing; to destroy communalism it is not necessary to destroy religion. Indeed, even educated Indians need to be taught that religion ought not to affect purely political, social and economic life, and that if a religion has been revealed by God to men, it must make them better men, more patriotic, more freedom loving, more self-sacrificing, less separatist and exclusive, far from what is connoted by the ugly word 'communalistic.' If it is impossible for the State to provide each child with education in its own religion, let the State leave that work to private agencies. But religious education—not mere moral principles based on reason, but also the fruits of Divine revelation and the practical principles which follow from them—must be provided. Every parent and child has a right to it and a duty to assert that right....

Let private bodies be invited and encouraged to undertake the running of rural schools, on condition that they follow that syllabus, with full freedom to teach children their religion within or outside of school hours.... This will mean that for convenience's sake those of the same religion will attend the same school. But it will not foster communalism and separatism if the children are taught by the right kind of teachers and the schools are supervised by the right kind of inspectors."

He further writes in another article, "More Light from Wardha":¹

"There is, however, one serious omission in the Wardha Scheme. It is a monarchy without a king....

"The knowledge that the religion one has accepted is the true one (i.e., the one revealed by God to men) ought not to make one less united to one's fellowmen but rather more, for this knowledge brings with it a deep

¹ *The New Review*, September 1938, No. 45, Vol. VIII pp. 212-15.

humility, and humility brings sympathy and love for others. If one's religion were one's own invention, one might feel proud of oneself and disdainful and jealous of rivals, but humbly to believe and do what God has made known and commanded is the best preparation for mutual toleration and national unity.

"It is because *belief* has weakened in India that practice has grown erratic. Mere polite respect for other religions will not stand the temptation of selfish gain; only strong conviction of what one believes and does can accomplish that feat. It is therefore bad psychology to fight shy of religion in its true sense (which means belief no less than morality), for even morality cannot stand without intellectual faith....

"If the child has a right to be taught his religion, his parents and their substitutes, his teachers, have a duty to teach it. The child has a right to be taught what he must believe and do, because he cannot find this out by himself with sufficient clearness and convincingness to be able to guide his

later life accordingly. Mere outward practices and lip formulas picked up from observation or hearsay are not enough preparation for life; their meaning and reason must be patiently cut into and studied with the thoroughness which such a serious subject deserves.

“This however, cannot be done at home. The homes from which the pupils of the elementary school come are not theological colleges, nor have their parents the knowledge or the time to impart to their children the religious education they need—this is just why schools have been invented. The duty has therefore to be undertaken by the school of instructing the pupils entrusted to it in the principles of their religion.”

Before taking up the criticism developed above, it will be appropriate to understand Gandhiji's attitude towards religion. Gandhiji himself is a deeply religious man. Time after time, whenever he is disturbed by any doubt or difficult situation, he has turned to the inner voice or the voice of God. God is a great reality to him.

“There is an indefinite, mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and that defies all proof because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses because it is possible to reason out the existence of God only to a limited extent.... It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within. Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself.”¹

“It can never be a matter for argument. If you would have me convince others by argument, I am floored. But I can tell you this—that I am surer of His existence than of the fact that you and I are sitting in this room. I can also testify that I may live without air and water but not without Him.

¹ G. A. Natesan, *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 1070-72. (Ed.)

You may pluck out my eyes, but that will not kill me. You may chop off my nose, but that will not kill me. But blast my belief in God and I am dead.”¹

He has also intense faith in the efficacy of prayer.’

“Prayer has saved my life. Without it I should have been a lunatic.... Prayer came out of sheer necessity. I found myself in a plight when I could not possibly be happy without prayer. The more my faith in God increased, the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it.... It is beyond my power to induce in you a belief in God. There are certain beings which are not proved at all. The existence of God is like a geometrical axiom.... It is a thing beyond the grasp of reason. It transcends reason.... I would have you brush aside all rational explanation and begin with a simple childlike faith in God. If I exist, God exists.”²

¹ *Harijan*, May 16, 1938.

² G. A. Natesan, *op. cit.*, pp. 1064-65.

Of all the religions, Gandhiji has been influenced by Hinduism most.

“I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults. I dare say she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing elates me so much as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana by Tulsidas.”¹

But according to Gandhiji, though different religions follow different patterns, they are essentially seeking the same goal. Mahatma Gandhi aims at developing tolerance for all religions, as they are essentially the same.

“The Allah of Islam is the same as the God of the Christians and the Iswara of the Hindus. Even as there are numerous names of God in Hinduism, there are many names of God in Islam. The names do not indicate individuality but attributes, and little man

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1058.

has tried in his humble way to describe mighty God by giving him attributes, though He is above all attributes, indescribable, immeasurable. Living faith in this God means equal respect for all religions.”¹

Arguments for Religious Neutrality

It may sound strange that a man of such deeply religious feelings should exclude the teaching of religion from his Plan. But Mahatma Gandhi is a realist. His personal religious beliefs do not blind him to the practical realities of the situation.

In the first place, there are practical difficulties. India has a multiplicity of religions and it is impossible to make provision for the teaching of all the religions in the state schools. The Heads of Schools affiliated to the Indian Public Schools Conference, who gave a very careful consideration to the problem of giving religious education in the public schools, failed to express an opinion which could be acceptable to all the members. The reason is obvious:

¹ *Harijan*, May 14, 1938.

“All Indian public schools try to give more or less the same kind of physical, mental and emotional education, as the needs of their boys are the same in these respects. But their needs are not the same when it comes to religious education. One or two of the schools contain boys almost all of one religion; others contain Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsees and Jews; yet others have a majority of boys of one religion and a minority, too large to ignore, of boys of another. Obviously, no one system of religious education will suit schools of these very different types. Each must suit its religious education to its boys.”¹

India’s population is heterogenous in religious composition. Its educational system must accommodate scholars of different religions and therefore must be necessarily secular. The State owes a duty to all its children irrespective of their religion or creed.

Gandhiji has therefore deliberately omitted religious instruction in the sense of teaching denominational religions. He writes:

¹ *The Indian Public School*, pp. 72-73.

"Unless there is a State religion, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to provide religious instruction as it would mean providing for every denomination. Such instruction is best given at home. The State should allow enough time for every child to receive such instruction at home or elsewhere. It is also conceivable that the State should provide facilities for private tuition by those denominations which may wish to instruct their children at school provided that such instruction is paid for by such denominations."¹

The Wardha Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board considered the question of religious education and they found themselves in agreement with Mahatma Gandhi's views. The committee concluded that "The State should provide facilities as at present for every community to give religious teaching but not at the cost of the State."²

¹ *Harijan*, 16.7.38; also *Educational Reconstruction*, pp. 108-09.

² *Report of the Second Wardha Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education*, 1939, pp. 38-40.

Mahatma Gandhi has no objection to private agencies teaching their religion within or outside the school. But here also there is a danger against which he sounds a warning. Religion as it is being taught today has divided humanity into different sects and creeds rather than brought about communal harmony and peace. If these denominations consider their own religion superior to other religions—as they very often do—they will only aggravate the trouble which is already acute at present in India on account of religious and communal differences. Mahatma Gandhi regards it

“... as fatal to the growth of a friendly spirit among the children belonging to the different faiths, if they are taught that their religion is superior to every other or that it is the only true religion. If that exclusive spirit is to pervade the nation, the necessary corollary would be that there would be separate schools for every denomination with freedom to each to decry every other or that the mention of religion must be entirely prohibited. The result of such a policy is too dreadful to contemplate. Funda-

mental principles of ethics are common to all religions. These should certainly be taught to the children and that should be regarded as adequate religious instruction so far as the schools under the Wardha Scheme are concerned.”¹

In India there are so many different sects and cults that it is almost impossible to combine secular with religious education. Religion in India is mixed up with fanaticism; it has been looked upon as a ‘powder magazine.’ In the name of religion people are likely to arouse fanaticism and “there is at all events a danger of reviving religious cults in favour of evil morals rather than good.”²

The Wardha Scheme aims at developing tolerance and mutual respect for all religions. The syllabus in the Wardha Scheme therefore includes the stories of ancient times in India and China; of Christ and early Christians, of the Muslim civilisation in India and the world.³ The study of ideas, events and leading figures in

¹ *Educational Reconstruction*, p. 109.

² H. R. James, *Education and Statesmanship in India*, pp. 87-88.

³ *Basic National Education*, op. cit., pp. 156-70.

the civilisations of the world is necessary for understanding modern civilisation. But this does not satisfy people who believe in "religious education—not mere moral principles based on reason, but also the fruits of divine revelation and the practical principles which follow from them."

Apart from the practical difficulty which

(2) Theoretical Difficulty

Mahatma Gandhi has pointed out in giving this kind of education, there is a theoretical

difficulty. Mahatma Gandhi is not a blind believer accepting unquestioningly all the traditions of his religion. His religion must satisfy his reason and correspond to the dictates of his conscience. He is very clear on this point:

"I do *not* believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Quran, and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense."¹

¹ C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 36.

Gandhiji has always taken a scientific attitude towards life and social problems. He has always tested his hypotheses, sometimes on himself, in various fields such as dietetics, sanitation, spinning-wheel, caste system, or *satyagraha*. The title he chose for his *autobiography* was "*My Experiments with Truth*." He would not expect people to accept everything that is contained in the scriptures unless they are convinced of their truth by their own experience. According to him, "One's experience must be the final guide. The written word undoubtedly helps, but even that has to be interpreted, and when there are conflicting interpretations, the seeker is the final arbiter."¹

The Zakir Hussain Committee, consistent with this viewpoint consider that "an experimental attitude of mind on the part of teachers is essential for the efficient working of this scheme."² This experimental attitude of mind on the part of teachers necessarily involves a critical evaluation of "the truths of divine revelation" and may possibly lead to the rejection of dogmas. The advocates of religious education, however, will not accept this

¹ *Harijan*, December 22, 1933.

² *Basic National Education*, p. 48.

position as they teach what is to be believed and many of them would not allow any kind of doubt or enquiry. It is difficult for the Wardha Scheme to adopt their position as the introduction of this kind of religious education in the schools will mean a sharp break with the critical methods of inquiry.

It should not, however, be understood to

Gandhiji's Idea of
Religious Education

mean that Mahatma Gandhi excludes spiritual training from his Plan. He gives the first

place to religious or ethical education. According to him, India cannot be restored to its 'pristine condition' unless it returns to religious education.¹ But he does not believe that such education can be given through religious books or scriptures. He came to this conclusion long ago when he was teaching children at Tolstoy Farm in Africa. He writes:

"I made the children memorise and recite hymns, and I read to them from books on moral training. But that was far from satisfying for me. As I came into closer contact

¹ M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home-rule*, pp. 93-94.

with them I saw that it was not through books that one could impart training of the spirit: Just as physical training was to be imparted through physical exercise, and the intellectual through intellectual exercise, even so the training of the spirit was possible only through the exercise of the spirit. And this depended on the life and character of the teacher. It would be idle for me, if I were a liar, to teach my boys to tell the truth. A coward of a teacher would never succeed in making his boys valiant, and a stranger to self-restraint could never teach his pupils self-restraint. I saw therefore that I must be an eternal object lesson for the boys and girls living with me.”¹

Here Mahatma Gandhi’s position is not only educationally sound but he is also acting in the true spirit of Hinduism. In Hinduism conduct is more important than belief. It gives freedom to the individual to hold whatever religious beliefs he may choose, but it enjoins a strict code of ethical practice. Theism, atheism, scepticism and agnos-

¹ C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi, His own Story*, pp. 203-04.

ticism—all are included in the fold of Hinduism. "It is more a way of life than a form of thought.... Hinduism insists on a moral life and draws into fellowship all who feel themselves bound to the claims which the moral law of *dharma* makes upon them. Hinduism is not a sect but a fellowship of all who accept the law of right and earnestly seek for the truth."¹ Spiritual life is to be attained in this world through right moral conduct.² Mahatma Gandhi therefore endeavours to realise God through the service of humanity because he knows that "God is neither in heaven nor down below, but in everyone."³

Considering all these difficulties—practical as well as theoretical—the best way is to leave the matter of sectarian instruction to private bodies and organisations who consider such education necessary apart from secular education. In this matter there is no reason for any radical change in the policy of the Government in India.

Once it is understood that a secular character need not necessarily be amoral, it was only

¹ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 77.

² S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 54.

³ *Young India*, August 4, 1927.

in the fitness of things that Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru recently declared that "the future Government of India must be secular in the sense that the Government will not associate itself with any religious faith, but will give freedom to all religions to function."¹ The Government can function in a truly democratic way only when it does not associate itself with any particular sect, creed, or religion. A democratic state which represents the interests of all and not merely of any one particular group must therefore necessarily remain secular.

¹ Cited in the *Indian Social Reformer*, December 12, 1946, p. 125.

CHAPTER VII

THE WARDHA SCHEME AND THE FUTURE

India is passing through a period of transition. A variety of social forces are at work today. The future of Basic National Education is necessarily linked with the outcome of these social, political and economic forces. No one can predict the future with certainty. An attempt, however, can be made to analyse the main trends and to indicate the general direction in which it is hoped that social reconstruction will now move. In human affairs our own preferences and efforts partly determine the outcome. Therefore, while the significance of the Wardha Scheme will be determined by the development of the national life of India, it is also true that the Basic Education programme can be an important factor in shaping these developments.

One of the most significant trends in Nationalism modern India is nationalism. It is an expression of the

people's demand for independence in political, economic and cultural life. Nationalism has developed out of this strong urge of the people of India to have political freedom, to develop their own economic life and to preserve what is best in their ancient civilisation. It is really a demand of the people that *Swaraj* (independence) is their birth-right.

In the pursuit of this objective, nationalism may take the form of a protest against the foreign system of education, or boycott of foreign goods, or revival of cottage industries, or linguistic revival.¹ The Gandhian Plan for Basic National Education is one of the expressions of this nationalistic cultural movement. The Basic programme of education has its roots deep in the cultural heritage of India. Its basic moral principles—truth and non-violence—are characteristic of the Indian way of life and are derived from the genius of the Indian people. Gandhiji has given a memorable expression to these principles but he did not create them. He has only formulated the ideals that have been inherent in Indian life and thought. Indeed, part of Gandhiji's

¹ A. J. Saunders, *Nationalism in India*, pp. 42-44.

enormous influence is due to the way he has expressed the soul of India.

It must, however, be made clear that Indian nationalism does not aim at creating barriers against new influences or modern scientific advancement. It is really aiming at true cultural growth which is based on assimilation and not on imitation. Gandhiji himself writes:

“I am humble enough to admit that there is much that we can profitably assimilate from the west. Wisdom is no monopoly of our continent or our race. My resistance to Western civilisation is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation based on the assumption that Asiatics are fit only to copy everything that comes from the West. I do believe that if India has patience enough to go through the fire of suffering and to resist any unlawful encroachment upon her own civilisation which, imperfect though it undoubtedly is, has hitherto stood the ravages of time, she can make a lasting contribution to the peace and solid progress of the world.”¹

¹ *Young India*, Aug. 11, 1927.

Moreover, Gandhiji does not seek merely to perpetuate the Indian way of life, but also to improve it. He does not hesitate in rejecting the ancient forms or institutions which are harmful or which have outlived their usefulness. He says:

“I am no indiscriminate, superstitious worshipper of all that goes under the name of ‘ancient.’ I never hesitate to demolish all that is evil or immoral, no matter how ancient it may be, but with this reservation. I must confess to you that I am an adorer of ancient institutions and it hurts me to think that people in their mad rush for everything modern despise all their ancient traditions and ignore them in their lives.”¹

When Gandhiji realised that in India’s heritage religion, instead of uniting people into one nation, was seriously dividing and weakening Indian nationhood, he did not hesitate in excluding it from the new plan of Basic Education.

It will thus be seen that though Indian nationalism attempts to preserve what is best in its own

¹ R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 173.

civilisation, it is not a blind revival of the past. It seeks to assimilate all that is good in other cultures without losing its own identity or values.

Another significant trend that may be noticed in modern India is that of Economic Planning economic planning. It is being realised gradually that it is only through a planned economy that minimum comforts of life and the attainment of a minimum standard can be assured for the whole of Indian population and not merely for a section of it.

The work was started in 1939 by the National Planning Committee, appointed by the Indian National Congress under the chairmanship of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. The Committee consisted of members of varied interests, —industrialists, financiers, economists, professors, scientists, as well as the representatives of the Trade Union Congress. The original idea behind the Plan was to further industrialisation and to solve the problems of poverty and unemployment, of national defence and of economic regeneration. The Plan was to make provision for the development of heavy key in-

dustries, medium scale industries, as well as cottage industries. But as the work of the Committee proceeded, it had to include agriculture, social services and other aspects of national life.

The Committee had a difficult task before it. It wanted to evolve a scheme which would bring about a planned economy and at the same time meet the general consent of varied interests. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru writes about the plan thus:

“Our plan as it developed was inevitably leading us towards establishing some of the fundamentals of the socialist structure. It was limiting the acquisitive factor in society, removing many of the barriers to growth, and thus leading to a rapidly expanding social structure. It was based on planning for the benefit of the common man, raising his standards greatly, giving him opportunities for growth, and releasing an enormous amount of latent, talent and capacity. All this was to be attempted in the context of democratic freedom and with a large measure of cooperation of some at least of the groups who were normally opposed to socialistic

doctrine. That cooperation seemed to me worthwhile even if it involved toning down or weakening the Plan in some respects.... If conflict was inevitable, it had to be faced. But if it could be avoided or minimised, that was an obvious gain.... It was easy enough to draw up blue prints based on some idealist conception. It was much more difficult to get behind them that measure of general consent and approval which was essential for the satisfactory working of any plan.”¹

This was followed by “A Plan for Economic Development for India” (usu-
The Bombay Plan ally known as “The Bombay Plan”) prepared by some leading industrialists—Sir Purushotamdas and his seven colleagues. Whatever its shortcomings this plan has seemed to focus public attention on the need for economic planning.

The Bombay Plan is a fifteen-year plan divided into three five-year stages and involving a capital expenditure of 100,000 million rupees. The Plan has “the modest aim of securing a general standard

¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 405.

of living which would leave a reasonable margin over the minimum requirements of human life."² It aims at a threefold increase in the total national income within a period of fifteen years, thereby doubling the per capita income, allowance being made for increase in population. This is to be achieved mainly through industries. The Plan also attempts to build up a balanced economy by reducing the present overwhelming predominance of agriculture without changing the essentials of an agricultural economy. According to the national income figures for 1931-32, the contribution of industry, agriculture and services to the total national dividend of British India was estimated at 17, 53 and 22 per cent respectively. (About 8 per cent of the income was not classified under any of these categories.) Under this Plan, these percentages would be changed roughly to 35, 40 and 20. Basic industries which include power, mining, engineering, chemicals, armaments, transport and cement would get priority. Adequate scope is to be provided for small-scale and cottage industries.¹

With regard to the question of the rôle of

¹ Sir Thakurdas, Purushottamdas, and Others, *A Plan for Economic Development for India*.

the State in economic planning, the authors of the Bombay Plan recommend a middle path. They have attempted to bring about a compromise between capitalism and socialism, a balance between private and State enterprise. The Plan does not visualise any fundamental change in the basic structure of present society. "There is a yawning gap between its far-reaching objectives and the means and machinery proposed to reach them."¹

The second important economic programme that has been recently published is "The Gandhian Plan." As Gandhiji himself writes in the foreword, the Plan seeks to translate Gandhian ideals "in terms of modern political science." The author of the Plan points out that in India the principles of planning should be in accordance with three principles, namely, nationalism, democracy and livelihood. All the three types of plans —Nazi, American, and Russian—fall short of these ideals. The Indian Plan should provide scope not only for livelihood but also for individual development. The Plan, there-

¹ Bimal C. Ghose, *Planning for India*, p. 63.

fore, should be based on simplicity, decentralisation and cottage industrialism. Villages should be organised into more or less self-sufficient cooperative communities seeking the development of agriculture and cottage industries on scientific lines. The Plan provides the use of electricity for certain agricultural processes. Nationalisation of land and consolidation of holdings on a voluntary basis is recommended. Consumption goods will be supplied mainly by cottage industries but basic industries are not neglected. The Plan provides adequate scope for private or cooperative enterprise and initiative in the organisation of village industries, but the basic and key industries are to be owned by the State.¹

The central emphasis of the Gandhian Plan differs fundamentally from that of the Bombay Plan. Both provide for cottage industries and basic key industries, but in the Bombay Plan the main emphasis is on rapid industrial development of the country whereas the Gandhian Plan advocates decentralisation and cottage industrialism.

¹ S. N. Agarwal, *The Gandhian Plan*.

Another important step which was recently taken by the interim-government of India towards planning was the appointment of the Advisory Planning Board to make a rapid survey of all the work done in planning and "to make recommendations regarding the co-ordination and improvement of planning, and as regards objectives and priorities and the future machinery of planning." The general objectives of planning are "to raise the general standard of living of the people as a whole and to ensure useful employment for all." The attainment of these objectives, the report says, "requires that the resources of the country should be developed to the maximum extent possible and that the wealth produced should be distributed in an equitable manner." Among the main recommendations of the Advisory Planning Board are the appointment of a planning commission under the Central Government, a consultative body, establishment of a central Statistical Office and the placing of the Tariff Board on a permanent basis with wider functions.

On the question of State ownership and management of industries, the Board are of the

opinion that if at the present juncture the State attempted to take into its own hand the ownership and management of a wide range of industries, the industrial development of the country might not be very rapid. The report continues:

“Nevertheless, it seems to us that it should be our policy to bring under State ownership and management some at least of the basic industries of the country and that the execution of such a policy should be part of our plans. We recommend therefore that apart from Defence industries and any industry or branch of any industry which might be found desirable to start as a State enterprise through the reluctance of private capital to undertake it, the nationalization of the following should be considered: coal; mineral oils; iron and steel; motor, air and river transport.”¹

These tendencies clearly indicate that India is moving slowly towards a planned economy without which there can be no economic prosperity for the masses.

¹ *Indian Information*, Feb. 15, 1947, pp. 135-37.

The Wardha Scheme
and Economic Develop-
ment

The greatest obstacle which the Government of India have to face in the execution of the plans for economic development is the lack of suitable personnel¹. It is hoped that the Wardha Scheme with its emphasis on craft will help in producing future technicians. With the economic development of the country, the Plan itself will need certain modifications to satisfy the needs of changing society.

Another great advantage of the Wardha Scheme is that it will help in bringing about a natural coordination between the village and the city which is a great necessity in an agricultural country like India.

Gandhiji's philosophy is likely to have a salutary effect on future planning. In the first place, Coordination Between Village and City India's cottage industries will not be altogether abolished. Cottage industries can co-exist with big industries. During World War II, it was amply shown that cottage industries cannot only co-exist with big industries but

¹ *Indian Information*, Feb. 1, 1947, p. 70.

they are of immense importance in national economy and national defence. The skilled hands of millions of village workers made great contributions to the Indian war effort. In reviving cottage industries Gandhiji has therefore shown great far-sightedness and wisdom. Frances Gunther, who has an intimate and personal knowledge of India, writes:

“In the quarter-century between World Wars I and II, while fervid Indian nationalists urged complete Indian industrialization, and the British Government continued to stress raw materials, Gandhi preached the growth of cottage industries for the villages, as a middle ground between the evils of feudal agriculturism and modern over-mechanization. What Gandhi preached, India practised. Much of our United Nations equipment from Indian cottages is the fruit of his teaching. Gandhi, whom many termed a reactionary dreamer, has, in the event, proved to be a practical realist.”¹

Then again, India may spread out her industries and distribute the new factories over the

¹ Frances Gunther, *Revolution in India*, p. 98.

countryside.¹ There is a distinct advantage in transferring or starting organised industries near the sources of raw materials and labour markets in an agricultural country like India.

This will not only save India from the social dangers associated with large-scale production centred in a few great industrial cities and towns, but will establish intimate relationship between villages and cities and also between agriculture and industry.

“The bee-hive city of 19th century industrialism has been a parasite in India, draining the wealth and vigour of the population of its victims, the hundreds of villages of its hinterland. With a new orientation and co-ordination between the city and the village in the future, we shall find that science and technique of the city will utilise the resources and raw materials and replenish the wealth of the village more than it will exhaust, and its life will stimulate the minds and enlarge the vision of a far greater number of people than it will warp or repress.”²

¹ Krishnalal Shridharani, *The Mahatma and the World*, p. 235.

² Radhakamal Mukerji, *The Indian Working Class*, p. 15.

Education and Politics

Educational planning must also take into account political trends. In India, as in other countries, education cannot be divorced from politics. Education and politics are inter-related. In fact, educational planning itself involves political choices. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, the then member for Education, Government of India, rightly pointed out in his recent presidential address at the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education:

“In this country under present conditions, we should remember, education has to work in a political atmosphere. We cannot get rid of it. We want a good state, as we all know from the time of Plato, in order that life may be well lived and work well done. The good State will not come into being unless all this pain and suffering are gone through. We get to the old truth again that a mother cannot bring forth a child without travail. The pain of politics is necessary for a good state to be born out of the womb of time.”¹

¹ *Indian Information*, Feb. 1, 1947.

This does not mean that education will be subordinated to politics but that education will take into full account the present social currents and tendencies and that it will share the responsibility of reconstructing society.

The future of the Wardha Scheme depends on political developments in India just as these political developments to some extent will be moulded by the kind of educational programme adopted. They are both intermixed and interdependent.

During the six years of the World War II and the period that has followed the end of armed hostilities, the political life of India has undergone a momentous change. The 1946 elections showed the crystallisation of opinion behind the two major political organisations—the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League. There has been a relative eclipse of other sectional groups. In the Central Legislative Assembly (elected on a narrow franchise of less than one half per cent of the population of British India), the Congress captured 56 seats with 91 per cent of the votes in all general seats and 59 per cent of the total votes. The Moslem League won all the 30 Moslem seats with 86 per cent of the Moslem votes and 27.6 per cent of the total

votes. In the Provincial Assembly elections, with a franchise covering 11 per cent of the population and between $1/5$ and $1/4$ of the adult population, the Congress obtained 930 seats and 55.5 per cent of the total votes while the Moslem League obtained 427 of the 307 Moslem seats and 74.3 per cent of the Moslem votes. In addition to these two parties, a third, the Communist Party, has emerged from the war years as an influential group. For the first time, the Communist Party was able to contest the elections and won 8 seats and 6,84,928 votes.¹

In order to understand the reaction of these parties to the Wardha Scheme and its ideology, one must go into the origin, growth and social and political programmes of these parties.

The origin of the Indian National Congress goes back to the year 1885 when Indian nationalism took formal shape. It will, however, be wrong to imagine that political life was altogether barren before this period. In India there has always been an intimate

Indian Nationalism
and the Indian National Congress

¹ R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, p. 476.

connection between the political field and the sphere of religious development. The Indian National Congress emerged out of the great movements of social, religious and cultural revival that made a great appeal to the masses in the nineteenth century. In 1828 Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded in Bengal the Brahma Samaj which made an attempt to reform Hinduism from within and also to bring it into contact with the religious and political thought of the West. In Northern India, a similar movement known as Arya Samaj was started in 1875 by Dayananda Saraswati, a Hindu monk and preacher. It represented a middle position between the conservative orthodox Hinduism on the one hand and the modern critical outlook on the other. Though Dayananda started from the religious truths contained in the Vedas, he soon found himself involved in the political field. Then there was a third movement which again was started in Bengal by Ramkrishna Paramhansa, who was born in 1836. He developed a movement for social reform which had great political consequences. He was followed by Vivekananda who was born in 1863. Vivekananda brought about a very fine synthesis of Hinduism and modern politics and has made a

great contribution to the nationalist awakening in India. During this period there was a remarkable revival of Islamic culture also. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan founded the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental college at Aligarh which later on became the Muslim University. The Aligarh Movement, as it was called had great influence on the political life of the Muslim community. Besides these movements there were other movements of religious and social reform among the Sikhs, the Christian Church of India and the Parsees which were great assets to Indian politics. In addition to these social and cultural movements there were two associations which were founded with a definite political objective, known as the British Indian Association and the Indian Association. The British Indian Association, which was founded in 1851, represented the interests of landed aristocracy. As a reaction to this, the Indian Association came into existence representing the educated middle classes. It paved the way for the Indian National Congress and lost its political importance after the Congress was established.¹

¹ C. F. Andrews, and Girija Mookerji, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India*, pp. 13-117.

It is against this background of movements for social, religious, cultural and political reform in which religion and nationalism were so intimately blended that the Indian National Congress came into existence in 1885.

The Congress soon became aggressive and defiant towards the government. It began to represent the lower middle classes as well as students and young men. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a Maratha Brahmin, assumed the leadership of the Congress. The moderate elements in the Congress, led by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, reasserted, themselves. There was a clash in 1907 in which the moderates won the victory. The Congress began to lose much of its political importance.

Mahatma Gandhi entered the political arena in 1919 and he has taken an active part in the nationalist movement ever since. He revolutionised the whole outlook of the movement. Now the Congress was not merely confined to the intellectual middle classes but it began to identify itself more and more with the workers and peasants.

“He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing

attention to them and their appalling condition.... He made it (the Congress) democratic and a mass organization. Democratic it had been previously also, but it had so far been limited in franchise and restricted to the upper class. Now the peasants rolled in, and in its new garb it began to assume the look of a vast agrarian organisation with a strong sprinkling of the middle classes."¹

Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress has, however, maintained a middle position so far in all such questions as capital and labour, landlord and peasant. The Congress was fighting against British imperialism and though its sympathies have always been with the workers and peasants, it could not offer any active opposition to the capitalists and landlords.

There is, however, an extreme left of the Congress which is known as the Congress Socialist Party and which is working for a more radical and uncompromising policy on social and economic issues. The Socialist Party has a capable leader in Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, who received

¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 363.

his higher education at the University of Chicago, in the United States, where he spent seven years in the nineteen twenties. Here he was greatly influenced by Marxist philosophy. His party has not accepted in principle or practice Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence. He and his party organised a sabotage movement, when most of the Congress leaders were suddenly sent to jail in 1942. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain is opposed to the Communists and to the Communist Party. He recently said: "I consider the Communists Quislings. They take their orders from a foreign government, and they would obey such orders even if opposed to the country's interest in a time of real crisis. They are therefore no friends of India." Mr. Jai Prakash Narain is also opposed to the division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan. He feels that such unholy compromises for temporary gain lead to nothing but disaster.¹

The Socialist Party of the Congress aims at working within the Congress and revolutionising the mentality of its members. The Congress Socialist Party does not want to break away from

¹ Dwarkadas Kanji, "Jai Prakash Narain," in *Asia*, December 1946, pp. 557-59.

the Congress but they do not completely agree with its programme which they feel is not sufficiently advanced. They also want to counter the growing tendency towards "parliamentarism" among Congressmen. The Congress Socialist Party has been constantly endeavouring to radicalise the Congress programme and to direct that body along the path of revolution.¹

The Indian National Congress is a national movement. It embodies the national spirit and is guided by aims and objectives of national advancement. It is representative in character. It belongs to no single section of the population. Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians have been its members and have been its presidents, the highest honour that the country could give to any person.²

The Congress is not a mere organisation but an organised expression of Indian nationalism. It includes in its fold people of different classes and interests:

¹ *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, July-Dec., 1939, pp. 360-69.

² Ambika Charan Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, pp. 140-54.

"The Congress is not only an *organisation*; in spite of severe repression, it is still the best organised body of India; it is a *movement* which is not limited by the political demands expressed in resolutions and formulae. The Congress, and what it stands for, find a response today in the hearts of the villagers, the humble town dwellers, the professional classes and the intellectuals. There are conflicts of views and ideologies within it, but it has succeeded in obtaining the acceptance of a general sense of discipline and loyalty to it, which enable it to be a potent machine in the struggle for national independence and mass awakening. Its activities are both agitative and constructive.¹

The Indian National Congress has been able to acquire such a tremendous hold over the masses because it embodies the hopes, aspirations and longings of the common man. "The strength of the Congress has lain chiefly in this—that it has always kept in touch with these deeper hidden

¹ *Condition of India: Report of the Delegation sent to India by the India League in 1932*, p. 89.

forces in the national life and has used them for increasing its hold upon the affection of the people.”¹

The Indian National Congress is democratic in its outlook. It stands for absolute freedom of religion to all citizens, as well as freedom of speech, assembly and press. It also provides for equality of all citizens before the law, regardless of religion, caste, creed or sex. It further provides for universal adult suffrage and free compulsory primary education. Its faith in political democracy was expressed in a resolution passed at its session held at Karachi in 1931. The Karachi Resolution² on “Fundamental Rights and Duties” runs as follows:

“(i) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law and morality.

¹ C. F. Andrews and Girija Mookerji, *The Rise and Growth of the Congress in India*, p. 131.

² B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Congress*, pp. 779-82.

- “(ii) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.
- “(iii) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.
- “(iv) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.
- “(v) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling..
- “(vi) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public. (Removal of untouchability.)
- “(vii) Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.

- “(viii) No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
- “(ix) The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.
- “(x) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
- “(xi) The State shall provide free and compulsory primary education.
- “(xii) The State shall confer no titles.
- “(xiii) There shall be no capital punishment.
- “(xiv) Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling, and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.”

The Karachi Resolution also contains a programme on labour, taxation and expenditure, and on economic and social reorganisation. The Resolution provides safeguards for the interests of industrial workers, minimum wages and hours, arbitration in labour disputes, “suitable machinery

for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen," social insurance against old age, sickness and unemployment, banning of child labour in factories and mines, protection of women workers, and the right of industrial and agricultural workers to form unions.

The economic and social programme includes measures for the protection of indigenous industries against foreign competition, the regulation of currency and exchange and the provision for "the military training of citizens so as to organise a means of national defence apart from the regular military forces." With regard to key industries, the Resolution (Section 15) reads: "The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, water ways, shipping and other means of public transport."¹

The Congress at its session held at Lucknow in 1936 passed another resolution which has added agrarian reform to its programme. The resolution provides for the freedom of organisation of agricultural labourers and peasants, "emancipation of peasants from feudal and semi-feudal

¹ *Ibid.*

levies, state aid for the economic and cultural development of the villages; fostering of cottage industries for relieving rural unemployment, and reform of the system of land tenure, revenue and rent.”¹

It will thus be seen that the Congress stands not merely for political democracy, but also for economic democracy to a large extent. This resolution in a general way grants approval to the nationalisation or state-ownership of key and heavy industries. It must, however, be made clear that the Congress has by no means accepted socialism. It contains among its members big industrialists as well as poor peasants.

In the Congress election programme of 1946, the Congress restated the democratic principles already expressed in the Fundamental Rights Resolution of 1931. It also expressed its faith in a federal constitution with full autonomy to the constituent units. The manifesto reads:

“The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen in India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups

¹ *The Indian Annual Register, 1936*, Vol. I, p. 286.

and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality.

“The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic state with the fundamental rights and liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the constitution. This constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under universal, adult suffrage. The federation of India must be a willing union of its various parts. In order to give the maximum of freedom

to the constituent units there may be a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optional list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units as desire to do so.³¹

The subject of national education was placed on the agenda of the Haripura Session of the Congress in February, 1938. The Congress, in approving the Wardha Scheme passed the following resolution:

“The Congress has emphasized the importance of national education ever since 1906, and during the non-cooperation period many national educational institutions were under its auspices. The Congress attaches the utmost importance to a proper organisation of mass education and holds that all national progress ultimately depends on the method and content and objective of the education that is provided for the people. The existing system of education in India is admitted to have failed. Its objectives

¹ R. Palme Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 389-90.

have been antiquated, and it has been confined to a small number of people and has left the vast majority of our people illiterate. It is essential, therefore, to build up national education on new foundations and on a nation-wide scale. As the Congress is having new opportunities of service and of influencing and controlling state education, it is necessary to lay down the basic principles which should guide such education and to take other necessary steps to give effect to them.

“The Congress is of the opinion that for the primary and secondary stages Basic education should be imparted in accordance with the following principles:

- “(1) Free and compulsory education should be provided for seven years on a nation wide scale.
- “(2) The medium of instruction must be the mother tongue.
- “(3) Throughout this period education should centre round some form of manual and productive work, and all other activities

to be developed and training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft, chosen with due regard to the environment of the child. Accordingly, the Congress is of the opinion that an All-India Education Board to deal with this basic part of education be established, and for this purpose requests and authorises Dr. Zakir Hussain and Sri E. W. Aryanayakam to take immediate steps, under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji to bring such a Board into existence, in order to work out in a consolidated form a programme of basic national education and to recommend it for acceptance to those who are in control of state and private education.

“The said Board shall have power to frame its own constitution, to raise funds and perform all such acts as may be necessary for the fulfilment of its object.”¹

The Congress Socialist Party also supported the general principles of the plan. The Resolu-

¹ *The Indian Annual Register*, Jan. June, 1938, Vol. I, pp. 298-99.

tion, for adopting the Plan was moved by Acharya Narendra Deva, the Socialist leader. The Socialists realised that the principle of labour education was not only scientific but also respectable.¹

In order to understand the present policy of

The Moslem League
and the Indian Nation-
al Congress

the Moslem League and its
conflict with the Indian Na-
tional Congress, one must

study its origin and growth. Though some liberal and progressive-minded Moslems joined the Congress when it was first established, the Moslems as a body stood aloof. Leading Moslems like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan were opposed to any close amalgamation with the Congress. Sir Syed, though an ardent social reformer, held that Moslems in India must stand by themselves and work out their own salvation as a community with the help of the British. He represented that class of Mohammedan aristocracy which "began to assume the defensive at the prospect of a new national and democratic régime dominated by the educated middle class."² The Moslem League was founded in 1806, under the leadership of the Aga Khan (who was also loyal

¹ Kriplani, *The Latest Fad: Basic Education*, p. 9.

² Hans Kohn, *A History of Nationalism in the East*, p. 366.

to the British) as a counterpoise to the Congress. About 1910, however, there was a change in the Moslem attitude. The revolution in Turkey and Persia made a deep impression upon the younger generation of Moslems. The policy pursued by the British in the Balkan Wars further aroused their sympathy for Turkey and they grew more anti-British. This brought about a temporary *rapprochement* between the Congress and the Moslem community. Nationalism made a strong appeal specially to the younger generation of Moslems who made a common cause with the Congress in the national struggle for freedom.¹ Lala Lajpat Rai, one of the most prominent Congress leaders of his time wrote in 1916:

“Turkey’s war with Italy, followed by her struggle with the Balkan States, has done wonders in nationalising the Indian Mohammedans. At the present moment the Mohammedans perhaps feel even more intensely than the Hindus.... The events in Turkey, in Tripoli, in Egypt and in Persia have affected the Mohammedans deeply and have brought about a revulsion of feeling

¹ Hans Kohn, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

against the British..... The Indian Mohammedans' changed sentiments towards the British are likely to be a source of great strength to the national cause and make the situation more hopeful from the point of view of Indian nationalism.”¹

The Moslem community as a whole, however, never identified itself with Indian nationalism. There were three main reasons for their remaining aloof. In the first place, it was the religious element in Indian nationalism which has kept the two communities separate from each other. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru has pointed out:

“Indian nationalism was dominated by Hindus and had a Hinduised outlook. So a conflict arose in the Moslem mind; many accepted that nationalism, trying to influence it in the direction of their choice; many sympathised with it and yet remained aloof, uncertain; and yet many others began to drift in a separatist direction.... This was the background out of which arose the cry for a division of India.”²

¹ Lajpat Rai, *Young India*, pp. 222-28.

² Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 353.

The second reason which kept the Moslems away from the main current of progressive nationalism was their conservatism and orthodoxy. It was pointed out earlier that English education did one great good to India and that was to create a new intellectual ferment and bring Indians in touch with Western thought. The Moslem community turned its back on the new facilities for education, whereas the Hindus took full advantage of them. The Moslems were, therefore, not influenced by new trends of political thought from the West. "The average Hindu student at this time," says Prof. Coupland, "knew more about liberal doctrines and nationalist movements in Europe than most young Englishmen. Certainly the average Moslem student knew less."¹

The third reason, which has really arisen out of the second, is the struggle for power and wealth. The Hindus dominated in the fields of industry and commerce and as a community, they became more prosperous than the Muslims.

"The Hindus were much prompter than the Muslims in adopting Western education and took more readily to commerce and

¹ Sir Reginald Coupland, *India—A Re-Statement*, p. 92.

industry. They are the more enterprising and consequently the wealthier of the two communities, though at both ends of the social scale in rural India there is little to choose between the well-to-do landlords at the top and the peasantry and labourers at the bottom who have nothing to lose but their debts. This disparity soon became a political issue, since Hindus tended to monopolise the jobs for which there was an educational test or competitive examination.”¹

The fourth reason which has created a cleavage between the Congress and the Moslem League is the identification of the former with the workers and peasants and of the latter with all the reactionary feudal elements. The Congress has gradually moved towards democratic socialism whereas the Moslem League gives shelter to reactionary forces behind the mask of religion. Mr. Brailsford has made a correct analysis of the situation when he writes :

“The broad fact is that the workers and peasants of Mohammedan India are not represented by the Muslim League, and where-

¹ H. N. Brailsford, *Subject India*, p. 98.

ever they have managed to organise, they are opposed to it.... Under all the political ferment in India, which seems on the surface to turn on constitutional issues and differences of religious belief, the underlying reality is this class cleavage. It is overshadowed today by the struggle against the Empire for independence. Tomorrow it will have to be faced. Already from their palaces the great landlords can see their peasants, Muslims and Hindus together, in the more advanced regions, marching in procession behind banners which display the hammer and sickle. That portent has caused them to rally to the League. Its appeal to religion offers the best hope of keeping their tenants divided. Like every privileged class they must divide to rule.... For my part, while I concede that the League has on its side wealth, social prestige and most of the press, which in India as elsewhere is necessarily in the service of property, I am content to point out that it is far from representing the whole of this community.... The tragic consequence of this struggle is that it divides, by an unreal partition, the mass

of India's workers and peasants, whose interests are identical."¹

These are some of the causes of the struggle between the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League. They have been aggravated by the presence of another potent factor—British imperialism which has believed in the policy of "divide and rule."

The present policy of the Moslem League which, under the leadership of Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah (who himself was once a prominent member of the Congress) demands the partition of India, should be judged in view of these circumstances.

Since 1940, the creed of the Moslem League has been the establishment of completely independent states in the areas where the Moslems are in a majority. A resolution of the League passed at its session held in Lahore in March, 1940, lays down the principles of this proposal:

"....It is the considered view of this session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims

¹ Brailsford, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-03.

unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."¹

The Moslem League strongly opposed the Wardha Scheme. It is no surprise that this national educational programme which aims at building up a new democratic social order based on equality and justice through the awakening of the masses should arouse the hostility and opposition of the reactionary elements which dominate the League.

The Moslem League and the Wardha Scheme

The Council of the All-India Moslem League appointed a committee presided over by the Raja Sahib of Pirpur to find out whether the Wardha

¹ *The Indian Annual Register, 1940, Vol. I, Jan-June, p. 312.*

Scheme would have the effect of preventing or circumscribing the progress of the Urdu language and Urdu script; and whether it would tend to obliterate or weaken the religious traditions and culture of the Indian Mussalmans so that they might lose their separate national identity and be moulded according to the political ideals of the Congress.

The Pirpur Committee issued its report on the Wardha Scheme on the 8th of April, 1939. The Committee declared that the Wardha Scheme would both prevent the progress of the Urdu language and obliterate the religious traditions and culture of the Mussalmans. For these reasons the committee recommended that the Mussalmans must have complete control over their education as regards policy, finance, curriculum and supervision.

Discussing the effect of the Wardha Scheme on Moslem culture and tradition, the committee says:

“Those who have experience of the working of the legislature in the Congress provinces are familiar with the callous disregard shown to the Muslim representatives. We need hardly emphasise that legislations are carried without giving due weight to the opinions

of Mussalmans. The experience gained in totalitarian states shows that the culture and separate individual existence of minority nations has been undermined by the system of education and Muslim youth would be converted without apparent use of force to the Congress creed by the introduction of a similar system."

The Committee further explained that a system of primary education was adopted in some countries as a means of wiping out the separate identity of various communities and welding them into a corporate state as well as to propagate the political and economic principles of the party in control of the machinery of state and for the conversion of the youth to the ideals of the party.

"We are in no way condemning the doctrine of non-violence but in an educational scheme there must be scope for teaching different forms of political doctrines. If from their childhood boys and girls are made to think in terms of superiority of non-violence it may produce the same results as the doctrine

of superiority of race has done in certain totalitarian states. To base an education scheme on the creed of a leader of a political party is to import a method of education that finds favour in totalitarian states and is clearly contrary to sound principles of education. This will involve giving education a religious garb. It will clearly imply the welding of two nations in one synthetic culture by means of a system of primary education and will only facilitate the conversion of the youth to the ideals of the Congress.

“We think that in a country like India, a land of various nationalities, only that system of education can be successful which is calculated to make a person understand the society of which he is a part and to create a great body of skilful people who would be tolerant of the other peoples’ views. A system of education which emphasises the superiority of one political ideal over others will encourage intolerance.”¹

¹ *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. I, Jan-June, 1939, p. 475.

The working committee of the All-India Moslem League, at its meetings in Bombay on July 2 and 3, 1939, passed the following resolution:

“The Working Committee disapproves of the Wardha Scheme on the following grounds, among others. Apart from its origin, conception and communal aspects, there are fundamental objections to the Scheme:

“(1) The Scheme is calculated to destroy Muslim culture gradually but surely, and the Working Committee is of the opinion that the textbooks are entirely unacceptable. The Scheme is intended to secure the domination of Hindu culture and language.

“(2) It imposes the Congress Party ideology, and aims at inculcating, among others the doctrine of Ahimsa (non-violence).

“(3) Its objective is to infuse the political creed, policy and programme of one party, namely, the Congress, in the minds of children.

“(4) It has neglected the question of providing facilities for religious instruction.

“(5) Under the guise of the name of Hindustani, the Scheme is meant to spread highly Sanscritised Hindi and to suppress Urdu which is really the *lingua franca* of India at present.

“(6) The textbooks prescribed and provisionally sanctioned by certain Provincial Governments are highly objectionable from the Muslim point of view, in that they are not only offensive to the feelings and sentiments of Muslims but are mainly devoted to the praise of Hindu religion, philosophy and heroes; minimising Islamic contributions to the world, and to India in particular, and ignoring their culture, history and heroes and speaking of them with scant courtesy.”¹

The All-India Moslem Educational Conference appointed at its annual session held at Calcutta in 1939 a Committee under the chairmanship of Nawab Kamal Yarjung. An account of the work done hitherto by the Kamal Yarjung Committee was submitted to the All-India Mos-

¹ *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, July-Dec., 1939, p. 347

lem Educational Conference held in Poona on December 28 and 29, 1940.

Referring to the Wardha Scheme the Report says that the Moslems felt sincerely that it was the spiritual element which must once more be restored to humanity. They were against the "over-intellectualisation of modern education and the over-emphasis of materialism to the neglect of the spiritual." They were against the Wardha Scheme because it neglected religion generally and yet brought into bold relief "*Ahimsa*, which was the religion of Gandhiji." Characterising the introduction of the Wardha Scheme by the Congress Ministries as a "Crusade against Islamic Culture", the Report says that the Moslems have another grievance against the Plan; it harked back to a primitive period of life.¹

The main fear of the Moslems is that Basic Education aims at building up a "synthetic culture" which would make them lose their separate cultural and national identity. This is exactly what the Wardha Scheme does not do. The Zakir Hussain Committee has taken the utmost care to see that children educated under this Plan develop a spirit

¹ *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, July-Dec., 1940, pp. 413-14.

of tolerance and mutual respect towards different religions and cultures. By excluding the teaching of any particular religion or dogma, by allowing free scope for the development of provincial languages, by recommending that the public schools should make arrangement for the teaching of both Hindi and Urdu, the Committee has given enough proof that it really stands for tolerance of different cultures.

It is true that Basic Education has emphasized the superiority of truth and non-violence, in all its phases, and its concomitant virtues, over violence and deceit. But the Moslems confuse non-violence as an ethical principle with religion in the sense in which religion is ordinarily understood. Non-violence is a creed not of Gandhism alone, but it is a moral principle to which the world will gradually have to reconcile after the invention of the atomic bomb if humanity is to survive.

There is nothing in the Wardha Scheme which aims at destroying Islamic culture. On the other hand, the Wardha Scheme in its emphasis on the concrete, scientific study of nature and history through the methods of observation and experiment comes very close to the spirit of Moslem culture

and the philosophy of Islam. The great philosopher, Sir Mohammed Iqbal, writes:

“Inner experience is only one source of human knowledge. According to the Quran there are two other sources of knowledge —nature and history; and it is in tapping these sources of knowledge that the spirit of Islam is seen at its best....The first important point to note about the spirit of Muslim culture is that for purposes of knowledge, it fixes its gaze on the concrete, the finite....Knowledge must begin with the concrete. It is the intellectual capture of and power over the concrete that makes it possible for the intellect of man to pass beyond the concrete.”¹

The fears of the Moslems seem to be based on prejudice rather than on genuine grounds. A devout Muslim like Dr. Zakir Hussain who has devoted his whole lifetime to the propagation of Islamic culture through education, could never have become party to a plan which aimed at destroying Islamic culture.

¹ Mohammed Iqbal, *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, pp. 178-83.

Another important party which has to be taken into account today is the Communist Party of India. The Rise of the Indian Communist Party

During the period of the national crisis in 1942-45, when the Congress leaders were in jail, the Communist leaders took advantage of their absence by increasing their influence among the workers and particularly in the Trade Union movement. The following Table¹ will indicate the growth of the Trade Union movement in India:

TABLE XI

The Growth in Membership of the All-India Trade Union Congress

Year	No. of Trade Unions	Registered Membership
1938	188	363,450
1940	195	374,256
1941	182	337,695
1942	191	269,803
1943	259	332,079
1944	515	509,084

The rapid progress that the Communist Party has made since 1942 may be judged by the following figures:²

¹ Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

² Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

TABLE XII

The Growth in Membership of the Communist Party

Year	Membership
July, 1942	4,000
May, 1943	15,000
January, 1944	30,000
Summer, 1946	53,000

Though the Communists recognise the great advance that the National Communists' Attitude towards Gandhism has made in the Congress has made in the fight for national freedom under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, they consider his theory of non-violence as the main cause of the failure of the movement to achieve freedom. "Non-violence" is characterised by them as "an element alien to the mass struggle, an element of petty-bourgeois moralising, speculations and reformist pacifism."¹ Mr. P. C. Joshi, the secretary of the Indian Communist Party described Gandhism as "the outlook of negation, the policy of passivity and the practice of subservience."² The Communists consider Gandhiji as the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

² P. C. Joshi, *The Indian Communist Party*, p. 26.

greatest obstacle to a successful mass movement. He has been described as "the ascetic defender of property in the name of the most religious and idealist principles of humility and love of poverty," and "the best guarantee of the shipwreck of any mass movement which had the blessing of his association." Gandhiji is considered by them as a champion of the bourgeoisie and an enemy of revolution.

"This Jonah of revolution, this general of unbroken disasters was the mascot of the bourgeoisie in each wave of the developing Indian struggle..... All the hopes of the bourgeoisie (the hostile might say, the hopes of imperialism) were fixed on Gandhi as the man to ride the waves, to unleash just enough of the mass movement in order to drive a successful bargain, and at the same time to save India from revolution."¹

But according to the Communists, Gandhiji was indispensable in the period of transition from bourgeois nationalism to class war. But, ultimately Gandhism will end and will give place to class war.

¹ Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

“No other leader could have bridged the gap, during this transitional period, between the actual bourgeois direction of the national movement and the awakening, but not yet conscious masses. Both for good and evil Gandhi achieved this, and led the movement, even appearing to create it. This rôle only comes to an end in proportion as the masses begin to reach clear consciousness of their own interests, and the actual class forces and class relations begin to show out clear in the Indian scene without need of mythological concealments.”¹

The Communists recognise the commonsense, practical reasons for the revival of village industries and the spinning wheel in a country where the overcrowded population on the land remains unoccupied for nearly half the working year, but they consider it only as a “temporary palliative.”

“Nevertheless, it is a palliative which is based on acceptance of the worst evils of the existing distortion and cramping of Indian economy, and is directed to adaptation to these

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 510.

evils instead of to changing them.... The propaganda of a primitive economy as a solution for India's problems is reactionary, not only because it leads in the opposite direction to that in which the solution must be sought (for the existing evils of poverty and misery are rooted in primitive technique, which is itself rooted in the social system of exploitation under imperialism), but because it serves as a diversion from the basic social tasks confronting the peasantry and the masses of the people.”¹

On the national question, the Communist Party supports the right of the Moslem League to demand a separate State. In fact, it holds that India is not one nation, but like the Soviet Union has a multi-national character. This policy of the Communist Party of India was put forward in the memorandum submitted to the British Cabinet Mission in 1946:

“We suggest that the provisional Government should be charged with the task of setting up a Boundaries Commission to re-draw the boundaries on the basis of

¹ Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 509.

natural ancient homelands of every people, so that the re-demarcated Provinces become as far as possible linguistically and culturally homogeneous national units, e.g., Sind, Pathanland, Baluchistan, Western Punjab etc. The people of each unit should have the unfettered right of self-determination, i.e., the right to decide freely whether they join the Indian Union or form a separate sovereign State or another Indian Union."¹

The proposal of the Communist Party in support of Pakistan is, however, not so innocent as it appears. It has another aspect which the Communists of India have conveniently left out in this context. According to their view, the nationalists cannot achieve their emancipation without class war and without the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Dr. Rajendra Prasad has pointed out:

"It is on the twin principles of the recognition of the right of secession of nationalities and of the establishment of a Soviet State and of the dictatorship of the proletariat that the fraternal collaboration of peoples

¹ Dutt, *op cit.*, p. 390.

within a single confederate State can be built up. It will not do to take up one aspect, viz., the right of secession and leave out the other viz., the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”¹

The Communists of India have little sympathy with the national struggle. The Communist Party relegated independence of India to a secondary rôle after Russia’s entry into war. It exercised a steady influence on the workers and dissuaded them from joining the national struggle in 1942.

They have no sympathy with India’s past tradition or culture. The Party takes its guidance and inspiration in all matters of social, economic and political planning from the Soviet Union. As Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru has pointed out:

“In India the Communist Party is completely divorced from, and is ignorant of, the national traditions that fill the minds of the people. It believes that Communism necessarily implies a contempt for the past. So far as it is concerned, the history of the world began in November 1917, and everything

¹ Rajendra Prasad, *India Divided*, p. 375.

that preceded this was preparatory and leading up to it.”¹

In 1925, Sir Surendranath Banerji, who took Reconstruction an active part in the public life of the country for fifty years and played an important rôle in building up the National Congress, left a note of warning for his countrymen. In the most critical period of her history, India needs this advice today more than at any other period. He wrote:

“We must indeed take our stand upon the old foundations. We broaden and liberalise them; and we build thereon. National life flows on in one continuous stream, the past running into the present, the present rolling on, in one majestic sweep, into the invisible and ever-expanding future, broadening at each stage, and scattering its fertilising and beneficent influences all around. Our moorings must indeed be fixed in the past, in instincts and traditions that have built up our history, and will largely shape and mould the future. But we cannot remain wedded to the past. We

¹ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 528.

cannot remain where we are. There is no standing still in this world of God's providence. Move on we must, with eyes reverentially fixed on the past, with a loving concern for the present and with deep solicitude for the future. We must, in this onward journey, assimilate from all sides into our character, our culture, and our civilisation, whatever is suited to our genius and is calculated to strengthen and invigorate, and weave it into the texture of our national life.”¹

India is on the verge of freedom. She is entering a new era in her history. One chapter is about to close and another to begin. She must reconstruct her whole social order in keeping with her genius and tradition and in view of the changing times. The new social order that is to be reconstructed must take into account two elements: (1) values of truth and non-violence which are deeply rooted in Indian culture and which are symbolised by Gandhiji, and (2) the nature of the changing society.

¹ Sir Surendranath Banerji, *A Nation in the Making*, p. 403.

It has already been indicated that the social order based on truth and non-violence must be democratic. The ideal is best expressed in the Fundamental Rights Resolution and Duties formulated by the Congress. It lays down that the Indian National Government must respect the personality of the individual; that it must have faith in reason and in the continuous progress of human society. It must provide equality of opportunity for personal growth and material security for all. The final authority of the Government must rest in the hands of the people and there must be freedom of thought and conscience and free exchange of ideas and opinions.

Secondly, the new social order must also take into account the changes that are coming in. India is reluctant to accept industrialism but she must reconcile herself to it. There is no other way to raise the general standard of the people. India may adapt industrialism to meet her own peculiar needs, and there may be a coordination of cottage industries, small-scale industries and heavy industries, but she must accept technology and science if she is to survive as an independent nation.

The Task before the
National Government

Taking this as the basic frame of reference,

what is the task before the
Indian National Government?

Obviously, the future of any

educational programme, including that of the Wardha Scheme will depend upon the character of the future civilisation of India. It is beyond our scope to examine the question whether India should remain united or divided. India has been a nation for centuries. It has a common language, a territory demarcated by nature, an economic life peculiar to it, and people with a special psychological make-up. The division of India will be no solution of the real problem of minorities. Even if India is divided, there will be minorities both in Hindustan and Pakistan.

The real problem before the Congress is to build up a democracy suited to the genius of India's people and to her social conditions. India may have had village republics in ancient and medieval times but for centuries she has had no continuous tradition of any form of national government.

Apart from the question of defence against foreign aggressors, the most important problem that India has to tackle today is the preservation

and development of democracy against the emergence of dictatorship within the State.

There are two main conditions for the rise of dictatorship—poverty and discontent among the masses and their inertia and indifference. In India both these conditions are present. There is already a growing influence of communistic as well as fascist elements among both Hindus and Moslems. If the Congress wishes to realise the dream of a free and democratic India, this is the critical hour for decision.

In the first place, the Congress government must take a bold step to reorganise Indian economy. It should put the recommendations of the National Planning Committee and the Advisory Planning Board into immediate effect and go beyond it, if necessary, with the double aim of increased productivity and a better distribution of national wealth. It is the responsibility and duty of the Congress government to bring about a collective economy which would serve the interests of the common man. This is the only way to prevent a bloody revolution and check the rising tide of communism and dictatorship in India.

In bringing about this socialised economy

it is probable that the Congress will come into conflict with all the privileged classes which represent vested interests such as the Princes, Zemindars and big capitalists. Every effort should be made by the Congress to resolve this conflict in a peaceful manner and without violence. But the Congress must face the situation boldly. It can shirk this responsibility only at the risk of losing hold over the masses. There can be no compromise in securing socially desirable ends.

In the second place, in order to check the menace of dictatorship, every effort should be made to shake off the inertia and apathy of the masses and create in them a positive love for a democratic India. And this can be done by evolving in individuals an experimental attitude of mind and an intelligent interest in public affairs. And it is here that the Wardha Scheme will make its own contribution. We have already examined at length how it aims at cultivating just these personal qualities—capacity for independent judgment, tolerance of other peoples' views and a high sense of civic duty which subordinates private interest to public good—which will help the individual to fulfil the duties and discharge the functions

imposed on him by democracy. If the Scheme is carried out intelligently, it will help to create those habits of minds which will not only make Indian democracy function successfully but also make it stable.

The Central Advisory Board of Education of the Government of India in their "Report on Post-War Education" have already accepted the essential principles of the Wardha Scheme. The Congress government should lose no time in putting the Plan into practice. There can be no greater danger to democracy than the ignorance of the masses. Democracy can rest secure only on the basis of widespread education of the masses.

In the third place, the National Government should make an earnest effort to eliminate the disruptive religious factor from Indian politics. The Resolution on Fundamental Rights and Duties which the Congress adopted in 1931 and wherein it says that the State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions should be strictly adhered to. It has been pointed out earlier that the influence of religion in politics has been one of the causes of communal conflict. India cannot develop a truly democratic form of government unless sovereignty is vested in the whole people,

not in some special order or restricted class of men.

A brief review of the Indian Nationalist movement has shown that the Indian National Congress which has now the control of the government of India came into existence in succession to a series of movements for social, religious, cultural and political reform. All these movements came into existence in response to a national emergency and to new social forces. The advent of the Congress has been a distinct stage in this historical process and it has done much to bring freedom to the Indian people. With the declaration of the British Government to transfer power to Indian hands by a date not later than June, 1948¹ India enters the most critical period of her history. In order to meet this new situation, the Congress itself must evolve to carry forward the historical process of bringing greater and greater freedom and security to the toiling millions of India.

The Wardha Scheme can play a significant part in this task of social reconstruction. It can be used by the National Government as a power-

¹ *The New York Times*, Feb. 21, 1947.

ful instrument for creating in the future citizens a keen interest in social relationships and social control. It can further develop in them a mental outlook which will not tolerate social inequality and economic injustice and at the same time bring about social changes without resort to force or dictatorship. Mahatma Gandhi has not only helped India to gain its freedom but, in introducing this educational Plan, he has also shown the way to maintain it and to make continuous progress.

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